

ADVANCED ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS, IDIOMS, COLLOCATIONS, SLANG, AND PHRASAL VERBS

MASTER AMERICAN ENGLISH VOCABULARY



JACKIE BOLEN

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Advanced English Expressions, Idioms, Collocations, Slang, and Phrasal Verbs: Master American English Vocabulary

Jackie Bolen

www.eslspeaking.org

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How to Use this Book

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

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

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

- Review frequently.
- Study a little bit every day instead of everything in one go. You'll remember a lot more that way. I recommend learning 4-6 new vocabulary words each day. Remember to review them every day until you'll never forget them!
- Consider using flashcards. Write down the word or expression on one side and the meaning on the other. Mix them up and quiz yourself. Do this while on the subway or whenever you have a few extra minutes in your day.
- Use each phrase, expression or idiom in real life as soon as possible.
- Don't be nervous about making mistakes. That's how you'll get better at English!
- Consider studying with a friend so you can help each other stay motivated.
- Use a notebook and write down new words, phrasal verbs, idioms, and expressions that you run across. Review frequently so that they stay fresh in your mind.

– Be sure to read frequently. Choose something that is slightly below your level and try to read it for at least 20 minutes a day. Read quickly and if you don't know a word, guess what the meaning is instead of stopping and looking it up in a dictionary. This is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary naturally. Do this in addition to using this book.

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

About the Author: Jackie Bolen

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

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

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

Jackie Bolen (www.jackiebolen.com)

Twitter: @bolen_jackie

Email: jb.business.online@gmail.com

You might also be interested in these books: 1001 English Expressions and Phrases, or 1005 ESL Conversation Questions. You can find it wherever you like to buy books. It has hundreds of helpful English phrases and

expressions that can be used in a wide variety of situations. Learn to speak more fluently in American English.

American English Idioms

A bee in my bonnet

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

Examples:

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

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

What's up with Cindy? She has a bee in her bonnet about her neighbor parking in front of her house. I don't think it's a big deal.

Add insult to Injury

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

Examples:

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

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

Talk about adding insult to injury . Did you hear that Carrie broke up with Tim after he lost his job?

A dime a dozen

Meaning: Something that is very common; not special.

Examples:

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

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

Cheap masks are a dime a dozen at this tourist market. I can take you somewhere to find some handmade ones that are much higher quality.

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

Meaning: Someone who is difficult to get to know.

Examples:

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

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

I like her a lot but she's a tough nut to crack . I have to ask her so many questions to find out anything about her.

Ahead of the pack

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

Examples:

I love to be ahead of the pack for the swimming portion of triathlons. Otherwise, you just get kicked in the face a lot.

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

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

A lot on my plate

Meaning: Many responsibilities.

Examples:

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

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

Don't you think you already have too much on your plate ? With your job and the kids, I don't think you'll have time to join that soccer team.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Meaning: Eating healthy keeps you from getting sick.

Examples:

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

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

You know why you're always sick? It's that fast food you eat every day. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

A piece of cake

Meaning: Something that's easy to do.

Examples:

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

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

If you're been paying attention in class, this assignment will be a piece of cake and you should be able to finish in under an hour. If you haven't been

paying attention, then I wish you luck!

As far as I can tell

Meaning: To the best of my understanding.

Examples:

We're not going to finish in time, as far as I can tell. Isn't the deadline in 4 hours? We still have at least an entire day of work left.

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

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

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

Meaning: Something difficult to get over or accept.

Examples:

Breaking up with me after I put him through grad school was a bitter pill to swallow.

Getting fired was a tough pill to swallow .

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

At the eleventh hour

Meaning: At the last minute.

Examples:

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

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

I know you're used to me giving you money at the eleventh hour, right before your bills are due, but I'm not going to do it anymore. You'll have to learn how to be responsible for yourself.

Back to square one

Meaning: Starting at the beginning again.

Examples:

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

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

Sorry about that decision. I know you worked hard on that. But, let's get back to square one and try to come up with some fresh ideas.

Bang for the buck

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

Examples:

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

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

I'm looking for a computer that offers a lot of bang for the buck . Macbooks are just too expensive for what they are.

Barking up the wrong tree

Meaning: Blaming the wrong person.

Examples:

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

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

I think we're barking up the wrong tree here. It's not Tim's fault that the suppliers didn't get him the product on time.

Beat around the bush

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

Examples:

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

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

Stop beating around the bush ! Just tell me what you're trying to say here.

Beat me to the punch

Meaning: Say or do something before someone else.

Examples:

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

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

You have to beat him to the punch . Be aggressive and say what you're thinking during those meetings.

Better late than never

Meaning: Encouragement after getting a late start to something.

Examples:

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

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

I for sure thought he wasn't going to finish that project. Better later than never I guess.

Bite the bullet

Meaning: Resolve to do something difficult.

Examples:

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

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

The garage needs some serious organizing. Let's bite the bullet and do it this weekend.

Blow off some steam

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

Examples:

Let him run around outside. He can blow off some steam before dinner.

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

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

Break the bank

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

Examples:

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

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

No, we can't buy that. Tim's tuition is already breaking the bank .

Bring a lot to the table

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

Examples:

You're going to have to bring a lot more to the table if you want us to renew your contract.

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

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

Bring me up to speed

Meaning: Update me or teach me something.

Examples:

Jen brought me up to speed already. No need to go over this stuff again.

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

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

Burning the midnight oil

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

Examples:

We're going to have to burn the midnight oil this week if want to avoid working on the weekend.

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

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

By the book

Meaning: Completely legal, doing something the correct way.

Examples :

You need to do this contract by the book , okay? The government inspectors are watching us carefully since that cover-up last year.

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

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

By the skin of his teeth

Meaning: Just barely succeeding, finishing, etc.

Examples:

We just escaped by the skin of our teeth . The bear had already started chasing us down the trail.

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

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

Idiom Review #1

by the skin of my teeth , bee in his bonnet, brings a lot to the table, beating around the bush, a lot on my plate, an apple a day keeps the doctor away, bang for the buck, barking up the wrong tree, bite the bullet, a tough pill to swallow

Ted _____. I think we need to give him a raise before he leaves.

I like going there but it doesn't offer enough _____.

Stop _____. Just tell me what you want.

I have _____ right now but can I get in touch with you next week? I'll have more time to talk.

I only passed _____. It was a small miracle!

He has _____, doesn't he? I don't understand what the big issue is.

I know you don't want to but you're going to have to _____ and just finish it.

Answers:

brings a lot to the table

bang for the buck

beating around the bush

a lot on my plate

by the skin of my teeth

a bee in his bonnet

bite the bullet

Call it a day

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

Examples:

Why don't we call it a day and get a beer? We've worked hard enough this week!

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

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

Calm before the storm

Meaning: A quiet period before a difficult period.

Examples:

If you think this is difficult, it's only the calm before the storm . Things are going to get much worse after Bob goes on vacation.

I think this is going to be the calm before the storm .

Please rest and recover now. This is the calm before the storm !

Caught between a rock and a hard place

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

Examples:

What are you going to do? You're caught between a rock and a hard place with no good outcome, whatever decision you make.

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

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

Caught me off guard

Meaning: Surprised me.

Examples:

Tammy just said that she wanted to get a divorce. It caught me off guard. I thought we were getting along well.

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

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

Costs a pretty penny

Meaning: Is expensive.

Examples:

Apple products cost a pretty penny but they're worth it. I love not having to buy a new laptop every couple of years. Ones from Apple last at least 5 years.

That new video game system costs a pretty penny .

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

Crack the whip

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

Examples:

You guys know that I hate cracking the whip . Please make sure the work gets done on time, okay?

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

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

Crunch the numbers

Meaning: Analyze data.

Examples:

We're going to have to crunch the numbers to see if it's cheaper to rent or buy a place in Vancouver. I have a feeling that buying might be cheaper if we can afford a down payment.

Let's crunch the numbers and see if we can figure this out.

I crunched the numbers and it looks like we'll be \$2000 over budget.

Don't see eye to eye

Meaning: Disagree with someone.

Examples:

When I was growing up, I didn't see eye to eye with my dad. We understand each other a lot better now though.

My boss and I just don't see eye to eye .

Her teacher keeps getting mad at her for talking during class. I think they don't see eye to eye.

Fall through the cracks

Meaning: Overlook something.

Examples:

My son has autism and falls through the cracks in the public school system. My wife and I are considering moving him to a private school.

Please don't let this fall through the cracks . It's too important.

I'm worried about this falling through the cracks , so let's make a note in our calendars to check on our progress in two weeks

Food for thought

Meaning: Something to think about.

Examples:

I mean you've given me some food for thought but I don't think that I'm ever going to change my mind about this.

Interesting idea. It's certainly some food for thought .

Thanks so much for your very interesting presentation. There was lots of food for thought in it.

From rags to riches

Meaning: Going from poor to rich.

Examples:

Have you seen that new movie with Will Smith? It's based on a true rags to riches story.

I love that story of that guy who went from rags to riches in just a couple of years.

I'm hoping I'll be one of those rags to riches stories with this new business I just started.

Get down to business

Meaning: Start working.

Examples:

Stop fooling around! We need to get down to business if we want to get packed up and leave by 9:00.

Let's get down to business . This meeting is only scheduled for an hour.

It's time to get down to business and finish this project up.

Get the ball rolling

Meaning: Start something.

Examples:

Let's get the ball rolling on this project. Time is of the essence.

We didn't get the ball rolling fast enough and our competitors came out with a similar product before we did.

Don't you think that we're already playing catch up? I'm not sure why we're only just getting the ball rolling now . We should have started months ago.

Give them a run for their money

Meaning: Provide good competition.

Examples:

I know that it'll be difficult but I think we can give them a run for their money and at least take some market

I think we can give them a run for their money if we play well.

Wow! The Blue Jays gave the Yankees a run for their money .

Go out on a limb

Meaning: To take a risk.

Examples:

I think you'll need to go out on a limb and take a few risks if you want to succeed in this industry.

I usually avoid going out on a limb during meetings and just keep my opinion to myself. It's not worth it.

You went out on a limb there! Weren't you scared of saying that?

Idiom Review #2

going out on a limb , food for thought, get the ball rolling, from rags to riches, caught me off guard, call it a day, aren't seeing eye to eye, crunch the numbers, crack the whip, bring me up to speed, blow off some steam, fall through the cracks, beat me to the punch, at the eleventh hour

Cindy _____ when she told me that she was getting divorced.

It's time to _____! This place needs to get cleaned up before we go to the movies tonight.

I may be _____ here but I can't be the only one who thinks this is a bad idea.

My wife and I _____ lately. I'm not sure if things are going to get better or we'll get divorced.

I need to _____. Why don't we _____ and grab a beer?

Make sure this doesn't _____. It's key to this whole project.

Funding came through _____.

Answers

caught me off guard

crack the whip

going out on a limb

aren't seeing eye to eye

blow off some steam, call it a day

fall through the cracks

at the eleventh hour

Go the extra mile

Meaning: Work very hard to do a good job. Doing something extra than is expected.

Examples:

You're going to have to go the extra mile if you want to get your contract renewed. They have very high expectations at that company.

Thanks so much for going the extra mile to help that customer out. They appreciated it and so do I.

I love to go the extra mile to help people out.

Got started off on the wrong foot

Meaning: Get started badly.

Examples:

I'm worried that my boss and I got started off on the wrong foot . I thought I was supposed to start at 10 but she expected me to be there at 9.

I know that we got started off on the wrong foot but I'm hoping that things will be better in the future for us.

That project got started off on the wrong foot because the main engineer was sick for a few days right at the beginning.

Got wind of

Meaning: Heard about a certain thing.

Examples:

Did you get wind of that rumour that Connor McDavid is going to get traded? I can't believe the Oilers would do that but you never know I guess.

Our competitor got wind of our new feature and copied us.

My Mom got wind of my plan to sneak out and I got in big trouble!

Go with the flow

Meaning: To relax and go along with whatever happens.

Examples:

I find it very difficult to go with the flow . I prefer to be in charge!

Let's just go with the flow and see what happens? I think it's all going to work out well in the end.

If you want to work for her, you have to just go with the flow . Things seem to change every 5 minutes.

Hit the ground running

Meaning: Start something and make progress quickly on it.

Examples:

I can't hang out this weekend. I need to brush up on my JavaScript. I want to hit the ground running at this new programming job I just got.

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

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

Hit the nail on the head

Meaning: See the problem clearly and precisely.

Examples:

What's the real problem here? We need to hit the nail on the head as to what it is before we start offering up solutions.

You've hit the nail on the head . That's exactly what we need to do.

I don't quite think you've hit the nail on the head . Let's look at it this other way.

In it for the long haul

Meaning: Committed to something or someone for the long term.

Examples:

Let's rent some office space and hire some employees. If we want to be in it for the long haul , we need to hire people

Melissa and I are in it for the long haul. Neither of us plans on ever getting divorced.

We're in it for the long haul , for better or worse.

In the driver's seat

Meaning: In control of something; able to make decisions.

Examples:

You're in the driver's seat here . I think you can negotiate for a higher salary or more vacation if you want.

I think we're in the driver's seat with these negotiations.

I like to be in the driver's seat at work—I hate uncertainty!

It's a long shot

Meaning: Something that's not likely to happen.

Examples:

It's a long shot but I'd like to see if we could do it.

I know it's a long shot but I'm hoping that you'll have this car part in stock.

I applied but I think it's a long shot to even get an interview there. It's so competitive.

I've got my work cut out for me

Meaning : A big or difficult job to do.

Examples:

Good luck with that! You have your work cut out for you with that job. The boss is a nightmare.

I've got my work cut out for me cleaning the garage. It's a mess in there.

I think you've got your work cut out for you with that project.

Keep me on my toes

Meaning: Always ready to deal with anything that might happen. A situation or person that is challenging and requires someone to be at their best to handle it.

Examples:

I'm not sure what you were expecting but that job isn't easy! The suppliers can keep you on your toes . They'll try to give you bad product if you're not watching carefully.

My kids keep me on my toes .

This job is keeping me on my toes . Things are always changing.

Keep this under wraps

Meaning: Not tell anyone; conceal something.

Examples:

I'm going to tell you something but you need to keep it under wraps until after the public announcement. Can you do that?

Please keep this under wraps . It's not public yet.

I'm hoping we can keep this under wraps so that our clients don't find out.

Knock yourself out

Meaning: To encourage someone to take action to do something. Often something that others think is a waste of time.

Examples:

Are you sure? Knock yourself out then but I think you should wait until Tommy comes over and he can help you out.

Do you want to take that on? Knock yourself out .

Knock yourself out with that! I hate putting up Christmas lights.

Learn the ropes

Meaning: Get trained to do something.

Examples:

The job isn't difficult but it does take some time to learn the ropes . There are a lot of very specific procedures that must be followed precisely.

I still need to learn the ropes for my job. It's not easy and it seems like it's taking so long.

Please help him with learning the ropes , okay?

Let off the hook

Meaning: To not be punished, even though he/she was caught doing something wrong. For example, a politician who doesn't go to jail even though he committed a crime.

Examples:

I can't believe they let him off the hook for that crime.

My brother always got let off the hook by my parents. He was always their favourite.

They're not going to let you off the hook if you get caught this time. You already have two strikes. Be careful, okay?

Make a break for it

Meaning: Leave somewhere quickly.

Examples:

Go. Hurry up. We need to make a break for it before dad sees us taking the car.

Let's make a break for it before he sees us and makes us stay.

I'm hoping that Tony goes for lunch soon and then I can make a break for it and get out of here.

Missed the boat

Meaning: To perform poorly or badly.

Examples:

He kind of missed the boat during that presentation. Why did he spend so much time focusing on unimportant things?

I'm hoping that we won't miss the boat on this. There's a lot of opportunity here.

I liked his ideas but don't you think he missed the boat? The real issue is the fact that we lost so many customers because of our poor customer service.

Idiom Review #3

missed the boat, make a break for it, let her off the hook, learn the ropes, keep this under wraps, keeps me on my toes, hit the nail on the head, go with the flow, get wind of, go the extra mile, by the book

Did you _____ when the new iPhone will be released? You're always in the know.

My son _____ now that's walking. I'm so worried he's going to hurt himself.

I think you _____ with your closing argument.

Don't worry about it. It takes people at least a few months to _____.

You _____. That's exactly the issue here.

We're going to _____ until next week so please don't tell anyone about it yet.

You shouldn't _____ so much! She's taking advantage of you.

Answers

get wind of

keeps me on my toes

missed the boat

learn the ropes

hit the nail on the head

keep this under wraps

let her off the hook

Money to burn

Meaning: Extra money to spend freely.

Examples:

We don't have money to burn and can barely pay our bills. I can't believe you bought that without talking to me about it first!

Sure, let's go out tonight! I've got a bit of money to burn .

I know you have some money to burn and want to spend it, but why not pay off some bills first before buying all that stuff?

My hands are tied

Meaning: Unable to do something, even if you wanted to.

Examples:

Stop asking me about this. I can't help you. My hands are tied and I have to follow company policy.

Sorry, my hands are tied . I can't reverse that decision Johnny made.

I'd love to help you but my hands are tied .

My lips are sealed

Meaning: A promise to not tell anyone a certain thing.

Examples :

Please don't say anything about this until we make a public announcement, okay? Okay! My lips are sealed.

Don't worry! I won't say a thing. My lips are sealed.

My lips are sealed. I'll never tell anyone about that!

Not going to fly

Meaning: Not going to work.

Examples:

It doesn't matter how pretty of a PowerPoint presentation you make. Tammy is completely against this idea and it's not going to fly , no matter what you do.

This isn't going to fly . There are too many variables that we can't control here.

I told him that his idea wasn't going to fly but he didn't listen to me.

Not set in stone

Meaning: Not decided 100% yet.

Examples:

You can still provide input about this. The plan isn't set in stone.

I think we're going to Whistler for Christmas but it's not set in stone .

Nothing is set in stone . We're still open to feedback about this.

Off the top of my head

Meaning : Without research or deep thought about something.

Examples:

It's difficult for me to answer that question off the top of my head . Let me look into this a bit more and I'll get back to you with a definitive answer tomorrow.

I need to do more research about this but just off the top of my head , I think we should go with Apple instead of Dell for our networking system.

Hmmm... off the top of my head , perhaps we could check into these two options?

Once in a blue moon

Meaning: Something that doesn't happen often.

Examples:

Enjoy it! This company only has parties once in a blue moon and I honestly can't believe it's happening this year.

We're getting a bonus this year? Really? That only happens once in a blue moon !

He only cleans his room once in a blue moon .

Out of my depth

Meaning: Not qualified for, lacks knowledge of.

Examples:

I'm out of my depth when it comes to the programming aspect of this project. Do you think we could hire someone to do the heavy lifting here?

I'm a bit out of my depth on this. Can you please explain it again?

He was out of his depth on that project. We never should have put him in charge.

Pick up the slack

Meaning: Working harder out of necessity because someone else isn't working hard enough.

Examples:

I'm so tired of picking up the slack for you. Just because you have kids doesn't mean that you can leave early every day and not make up the time.

Melissa had to pick up the slack for Logan on that project.

I've been picking up the slack around the house because my wife has been traveling a lot for work.

Pull the plug

Meaning: Stop or cancel something before it's finished.

Examples:

It's time to pull the plug on this concert. We just haven't sold enough tickets yet and we can still get our deposit back if we do it now.

Let's pull the plug on this, okay? We're not getting anywhere.

I'm going to pull the plug if we don't get some good results in the next week or two. We have to stop wasting money on this.

Put your money where your mouth is

Meaning: Actions need to reflect words.

Examples:

Be one of those people that puts your money where your mouth is and you'll do well. Never say that you can do something unless you can back it up with action too.

She never puts her money where her mouth is ! I'd love to see some actual results.

I know I have to pull through in a big way here. It's time to put my money where my mouth is .

Read between the lines

Meaning: Discovering something secret or hidden.

Examples:

Why didn't you read between the lines ? It was pretty obvious you were going to get fired after they took away your company phone and office.

I know you're reading between the lines but nothing is going on.

I think we should read between the lines here. It looks like that company is getting ready to take us over.

Rock the boat

Meaning : Cause trouble or make waves.

Examples:

I don't want to rock the boat but I don't think Steven is the best choice of leader for this project.

I think you can point that out to your boss without rocking the boat.

You're going to have to rock the boat if you ask for two weeks of vacation in a row. I don't think they're ever approved that before.

Rule of thumb

Meaning: General rule about something.

Examples:

My rule of thumb is to be kind. That's a good policy for any situation or person that you might encounter in your life.

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

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

Stabbed someone in the back

Meaning : To betray someone, especially someone with a close relationship.

Examples:

I can never forgive Tom for stabbing me in the back on that project we did together. When things went wrong, he was so quick to throw me under the bus.

Tim stabbed Tony in the back . I'm not sure how this is going to go down.

She stabbed me in the back years ago and has been dead to me ever since.

Strapped for cash

Meaning: Lacking money.

Examples:

Aren't you strapped for cash ? Why did you buy a new car?

I know you're strapped for cash but this is a great deal. I think you should do it.

Why don't you come over for dinner instead of going out? I'm a bit strapped for cash lately.

Take the bull by the horns

Meaning : Do something bravely and decisively.

Examples:

If you're not going to take the bull by the horns and do it, I will. Somebody has to be in charge of this project or it's not going to get done.

I think you should take the bull by the horns and make a decision about it.

Carol is great at taking the bull by the horns and getting things done! She's the best boss.

The ball's in your court

Meaning: You have the power to decide on something.

Examples:

I know you're nervous about asking for a raise but the ball's in your court. They need you way more than you need them.

I know you feel like you don't have any power in this situation but the ball's in your court .

The ball's in your court . You can decide what you want to do here.

Idiom Review #4

money to burn, my hands are tied, my lips are sealed, not set in stone, once in a blue moon, out of my depth, pick up the slack, pull the plug, read between the lines, rule of thumb, strapped for cash

Are you sure? I didn't know you had _____.

A good _____ is to make one extra for each order, just in case.

Don't feel bad about it! We only get to leave early _____.

You'll have to _____ when Keith is on vacation.

It's _____ but I think we're going to leave on July 2 nd .

Don't worry. _____.

I'm not sure I can help you with this. I'm a bit _____.

Answers

money to burn

rule of thumb

once in a blue moon

pick up the slack

not set in stone

My lips are sealed

out of my depth

The bottom line

Meaning : The outcome or thing to base a decision on.

Examples:

I know you don't want to but the bottom line is that you just need to get it done by Friday or you'll get fired.

The bottom line is that I'm not willing to do that. You'll have to find someone else who will.

When it comes down to it, the bottom line is that he wasn't able to get the job done. That's why we fired him.

The elephant in the room

Meaning: Something obvious and important that nobody wants to talk about.

Examples:

We just talk, talk, talk but not about the real issue. The elephant in the room is that our product is inferior and that's why we're losing market share.

I'm so frustrated at work! Jeremy never wants to talk about the elephant in the room, which is Tim's poor performance.

Why am I the only one who seems to see the elephant in the room? What's wrong with my co-workers?

Thinking outside the box

Meaning: Creative thinking about something.

Examples:

I hate how Erin keeps saying to think outside the box like it's such an easy thing to do! I feel so much pressure about coming up with creative ideas on demand.

I want to hear all the ideas and suggestions for dealing with this problem. Let's try thinking outside the box.

He's great at thinking outside the box and coming up with creative solutions for difficult situations.

Throw in the towel

Meaning: To quit or give up.

Examples:

Isn't it time to throw in the towel ? We've been working so hard on this for months and haven't made even a little bit of progress on it.

Let's not throw in the towel yet. We can still make some progress here.

I know you want to throw in the towel but you committed to the team and can't quit halfway through the season.

Tip of the iceberg

Meaning : A very small part of something much bigger, usually a negative thing or a problem.

Examples:

That leak is just the tip of the iceberg . There's probably water damage all over our house. I'm scared to even know.

That was just the tip of the iceberg . There are way more problems than that one.

I know that Jerry thinks he can solve this one problem and that all will be good but that's just the tip of the iceberg .

Treading water

Meaning: Barely keeping up with work or school.

Examples:

We need to hire a new person. I'm tired of just treading water and trying to keep up with everything. We have no hope of ever getting ahead.

I'm barely treading water with my job. There's just so much work to do.

He was only treading water for years before he finally got fired. Surprisingly, it didn't happen sooner.

Under the table

Meaning: Something sketchy or illegal.

Examples:

If you want to pay in cash under the table , I can give you a 5% discount.

You know I hate to do things under the table . Let's get the legal team in on this.

The best deals in my industry usually happen under the table .

Up in the air

Meaning : Not decided yet.

Examples:

What date works best for you? It's still up in the air for Tom and me.

It's still up in the air about what we're going to do for Christmas.

I'm not sure where everyone decided to go for lunch. It's still up in the air .

Water under the bridge

Meaning: Something from the past that is better forgotten.

Examples:

Forget about it. It's water under the bridge and I didn't even care that much about it when it happened.

Oh, that thing? It's water under the bridge . Don't even worry about it.

That mistake of yours is water under the bridge . Let's just move forward and try to do better in the future.

Weather the storm

Meaning: Make it through, or survive a difficult situation.

Examples:

Covid-19 showed which companies could weather the storm and which ones couldn't. The ones that could are stronger than ever I think.

I hope we can weather the storm and make it through this pandemic without going out of business.

Let's weather the storm the best we can. It's just a couple more months until Kathy comes back from maternity leave.

Within our reach

Meaning: Can be obtained without too much difficulty.

Examples:

Don't undervalue yourself! You have a top-class education and lots of experience. I think that job is within your reach .

I think that this contract is within our reach . We have to think carefully about our bid price though.

An A+ on this group project is within our reach . Let's work hard on it and see if we can do it. We have a great team.

Work my way up

Meaning: To start at the bottom and work hard to move higher up in a company.

Examples:

I just saw a movie about this guy who started as a janitor and worked his way up to management at a big bank. It was super impressive!

I want to work my way up in this company. I'm not going to stop until I'm the CFO.

He's been working his way up for years and now holds a very high position.

Idiom Review #5

the ball's in your court, the bottom line, the elephant in the room, thinking outside the box, throw in the towel, tip of the iceberg, treading water, under the table, water under the bridge, weather the storm

I'm not sure if we'll be able to _____. Covid-19 hit our company hard.

All those scandals are just the _____.

_____ is that you'll need to do more work and less playing on your phone.

I'm terrible at _____. I need a job that doesn't require creative thinking!

Call me next week if you want to talk more about this. _____.

I don't think I can hang out this weekend. I'm _____ at work right now and need to catch up.

Sorry, we can't take any payments _____.

Answers

weather the storm

tip of the iceberg

The bottom line

thinking outside the box

The ball's in your court

treading water

under the table

Collocations

Affordable housing

Meaning: Housing that is designed to be cheaper than normal, usually subsidized by the government.

Examples:

Affordable housing is a real issue in Vancouver. The working poor are having to live further and further away from the city centre and commute long distances to work.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Canadian government is affordable housing . There isn't enough supply to meet the demand.

Kids are staying with their parents into their late 20's these days because of the lack of affordable housing .

At the end of the day

Meaning: The final opinion about someone or something; the outcome of something.

Examples:

At the end of the day , it comes down to whether or not you want more money or more vacation. That's the major difference between those two jobs.

At the end of the day, he's not going to change. You have to decide whether or not it's enough for you.

At the end of the day, you have to let her decide what she wants to do. She's 20 years old and you can't make all the decisions for her.

Between jobs

Meaning: Describes someone who lost a job but is looking for another one.

Examples:

Doesn't Tommy always seem like he's between jobs? I wonder what's up with him.

I'm between jobs right now but have a few interviews lined up for next week.

I'm between jobs now but that's quite normal in the film industry. You work hard for a few months and then take a few months off.

Big picture

Meaning: Considering everything.

Examples:

Hold on a second. We're getting lost in the weeds here. Let's take a step back and look at the big picture.

I'm great at big picture things but looking at all the numbers in detail is my worst nightmare.

Keith is a big picture kind of guy. He's great at leading teams but isn't the best for keeping people on track.

Brutally honest

Meaning: Holding nothing back from each other; no secrets.

Examples:

To be brutally honest here, you're not living up to our expectations. You'll have to work a lot more quickly if you want to keep your job.

My boss was brutally honest with me and told me that I had terrible body odour last week. I'm honestly happy he told me. I didn't realize that.

When giving feedback, whether or not I'm brutally honest depends on the person. Some people can handle it but other people can't and you have to sugar coat it for them.

Can't afford to

Meaning: Don't have enough money to do something.

Examples :

I'm so sad that I can't afford to go on vacation this year.

Do you really think we can't afford to buy a new car? This one is so old.

No! We can't afford to keep eating out all the time.

Catch my breath

Meaning: Stop and take a break after a busy period.

Examples:

Give me a second. I need to catch my breath before we start the next problem.

Why don't we take the rest of the day off and catch our breaths ? It's been so busy this week already.

I like to stop and catch my breath after commuting to work. I grab a cup of coffee and read the newspaper for a few minutes before I turn on my computer.

Caught a cold

Meaning: Got sick (sore throat, runny nose, etc.)

Examples :

Last Christmas, I caught a cold and was sick for weeks after.

You're going to catch a cold if you don't dress warmly enough.

My whole family caught colds last month. It was terrible.

Common knowledge

Meaning: Everyone knows about it.

Examples:

I'm not sure why you're just figuring this out now. It's common knowledge that Tony gets barely any work done.

Isn't it common knowledge that you can turn right on a red light as long as there are no oncoming cars? Why don't people do it?

It's common knowledge that you should cut back on animal products if you want to prevent cancer.

Core values

Meaning: A person or an organization's most important beliefs.

Examples:

For difficult problems, we always need to go back to our core values and make sure that whatever decision we make aligns with them.

My company is just in the process of refining its core values . We've expanded so much in the past couple of years that they don't fit that well.

I don't think a company can run well without defining its core values.

Do the right thing

Meaning: Make good choices.

Examples:

Sandy is a solid person who can be counted on to do the right thing .

When you're a teacher, you often have to face ethical dilemmas. But, if you try to do the right thing , you usually won't go wrong.

Did I do the right thing ? What do you think? I'm not sure.

Down the road

Meaning: In the future.

Examples:

Down the road , I'd like to buy a house but it's difficult in Vancouver. Everything is so expensive.

I'd like to change jobs down the road. It's just that the economy is so bad right now because of Covid-19 that I'm thankful for the one I have and don't want to give it up.

Down the road , I'm not sure what my relationship with Kristy will look like. Hopefully, a bit more serious than it is now.

First things first

Meaning: Tackle the first thing before jumping ahead to other things.

Examples :

First things first , we need to find out what the issue is.

Don't get ahead of yourself here. First things first .

You always put the cart before the horse. First things first !

Food poisoning

Meaning: Getting sick from something that you ate.

Examples:

I got food poisoning from not cooking my chicken enough. There was tomato sauce on it so it was difficult to tell.

My worst vacation was when I got food poisoning in Thailand.

Food poisoning can be deadly if you don't get treatment and stay hydrated.

Get a degree

Meaning: Finish college and get the paper certificate proving that you did.

Examples:

You don't need to get a degree these days to get a good job. You can open your own business or go into a trade.

After I get my degree, I want to find a job at a big bank.

While getting my degree , I worked part-time as a server on the weekends to pay my tuition.

Get back on track

Meaning: Start doing well again, after a bad time.

Examples:

Let's get back on track here. We've already wasted too much time chit-chatting.

How can we help Timmy get back on track ? He failed two classes last semester.

Can you help me get back on track ? I can't lose this job. My family depends on it.

Get together

Meaning: Meet up with someone (verb). Get-together: A small party (noun)

Examples:

Do you want to get together this weekend? Maybe we can go for a walk.

Did you hear about Tom's get-together this weekend? Are you planning on going? It sounds fun.

Why don't we get together after the kids are back in school? I'll have a lot more time then.

Global warming

Meaning: The average temperature of the Earth increasing with each year.

Examples:

Global warming is a huge threat to our world and we are seeing record-breaking temperatures in most cities each year.

There needs to be massive action from governments to help slow global warming .

One of the biggest reasons for global warming is meat production.

Good friends

Meaning: A close relationship with a friend.

Examples:

I like to get together with my good friends at least once a week.

We've been good friends since elementary school. So many years now!

I try to stay in touch with good friends through video calls.

Good with computers

Meaning: Describes someone who knows how to use computers well.

Examples :

Why don't you ask Tim for help? He's good with computers.

You have to be good with computers to work for that company.

I've never been good with computers . I avoid using them if at all possible.

Good with money

Meaning: Someone who knows how to handle money well.

Examples:

Why don't you talk to Sarah? She's good with money and can help you out I think.

He's good with money and managed to save enough at his minimum wage job to put a deposit down on a house. It's very impressive!

People who are good with money would rather lend money than borrow money.

Got into trouble

Meaning: Had some problems happen.

Examples:

I got into trouble when I bought a new house and then lost my job.

Tommy got into trouble at school today. He hit another kid at recess.

I don't want to get in trouble but I do need to say something about Carrie. She is bullying a few different people at work here.

Great lengths

Meaning: Above and beyond what is necessary.

Examples:

You have to go to great lengths to get a job at Google. I don't even know if it's worth it though. They expect you to work such long hours.

I went to great lengths to help out Sid and he just said thanks and that was it.

Can you believe that customer service rep? She went to such great lengths to help me get a replacement phone. I'm going to email her supervisor and say how fantastic she is.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Meaning: What is released (mainly carbon dioxide) when fossil fuels are burned.

Examples:

One of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions is beef production.

Greenhouse gas emissions are the main cause of global warming.

We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions drastically if we hope to slow global warming.

Have a drink

Meaning: Drink alcohol.

Examples :

Let's have a drink after work.

I like to have a few drinks on Friday nights with my friends.

Do you want to have a drink with me next Tuesday?

High hopes

Meaning: High expectations.

Examples:

I had high hopes for Tommy because he had such great recommendations. But, I don't think he's a good fit.

I'm sorry it didn't work out. I know you had high hopes for this program to help you find a good job.

You had such high hopes for this girl! What happened?

Housing prices

Meaning: The average price of houses in an area.

Examples:

Housing prices are going through the roof in Vancouver these days. It's almost impossible to save enough for a down payment.

In general, housing prices increase from year to year, making them quite a good investment.

I'm waiting for housing prices to increase before I put mine on the market.

In the dark

Meaning: Not knowing about something.

Examples :

Let's keep Ted in the dark . I don't want him to ruin this surprise. You know he can't keep a secret.

I'm kind of in the dark about what Sandy is up to these days. Do you know?

I can't answer any questions about the product launch. I'm in the dark myself.

Collocations Review #1

affordable housing , housing prices, at the end of the day, high hopes, between jobs, get me into trouble, big picture, brutally honest, good friends, global warming, get back on track, down the road

I don't think it'll be that difficult to _____. Let's try anyway.

_____, we just didn't agree on having kids so we had to break up.

_____ are at record highs in Toronto.

You're going to _____ one day if I keep going out drinking with you.

Can I be _____ with you? Your work isn't high enough quality to send to clients.

_____, we need to move. Your commute is killing you.

Ted is _____ now but I think he'll find something soon.

Answers

get back on track

at the end of the day

Housing prices

get me into trouble

brutally honest

Big picture

between jobs

Keep in touch

Meaning: Stay connected via phone or email.

Examples:

I'm not sure if I'll be able to do this, or not. But, let's keep in touch and I should know more in a few days.

Hey, keep in touch , okay? I enjoyed talking to you.

How can we keep in touch ? Do you use WhatsApp?

Key issue

Meaning: The most important thing.

Examples:

The key issue is that we need to fire Sammy. Nothing is going to change around here until we do that.

What's the key issue ? I'm having a hard time figuring that out. There are so many problems.

I think the key issue is that our suppliers keep delivering sub-par products. We are wasting so much time trying to fix this. Maybe we need to make a change.

Last minute

Meaning: Doing something at the last possible moment.

Examples:

You know that I hate doing stuff at the last minute . Why did you only tell me about this now?

I have a few last minute things I need to do. I'll come over when I'm done. It should be another hour.

Can you come over on Friday evening to help me with the last minute wedding things? I don't want to be scrambling on Saturday morning.

Let me know

Meaning: Tell the outcome of something.

Examples:

Please let me know if you can come or not. I need to make a reservation.

Just let Min-Gyu know later. It's not urgent.

We'll let you know about the interview results within a week. Check your email.

Make a mess

Meaning: Make something untidy or disorganized.

Examples:

It's okay if you make a mess in the kitchen as long as you clean it up afterwards.

Ahhh. . .I made a mess of this spreadsheet. I don't know what I'm doing.

How did you make such a mess ? Please clean up your room before you go out with your friends.

Make some suggestions

Meaning: Offer some advice.

Examples:

Is it okay to make some suggestions ? I think there are some areas where we could make some big improvements to the procedures.

Please make some suggestions ! I need help improving my financial situation.

I hate how Cam always makes suggestions about what we should do but then never does anything to help implement them.

Minor injury

Meaning: Not a serious injury.

Examples:

Oh, it's just a minor injury. It looks way worse because of the bruising.

Thankfully, it's just a minor injury. Some bruising but nothing is broken.

My son Tim is so injury-prone. He has some kind of minor injury almost every single day. Thankfully, nothing too serious yet.

Mutual friend

Meaning: When two people share the same friend but aren't friends themselves.

Examples:

I think we have a mutual friend . You know Casey, right?

I can't believe we've never met. I just looked on Facebook and we have 15 mutual friends !

Ted and I have this mutual friend , Chris, who is the most generous guy. He always offers for everyone to come to his cabin.

My mistake

Meaning: Something I did that's wrong.

Examples:

Oh, that was my mistake . Sorry about that.

I don't think you did anything wrong here. It was my mistake . Why did Bob think it was you?

Oh, no. Was that my mistake that caused that to happen?

Needle in a haystack

Meaning: Describes something difficult to find.

Examples:

It's like a needle in a haystack . We're never going to find that line of code that caused the issue.

I know it's a needle in the haystack , but you'll have to go through everything with a fine-tooth comb to find it.

I can't believe we found that matching piece. It was a needle in a haystack for sure.

Not feeling great

Meaning: Feeling under the weather.

Examples:

Can we postpone this until next week? I'm not feeling great .

I'm not sure what's wrong but I haven't been feeling great for a few months now.

If you're not feeling great , take the day off. You have all those unused sick days.

Online shopping

Meaning: Buying things using the Internet.

Examples :

The popularity of online shopping exploded during Covid-19.

I never go to the store these days! I'm ALL about online shopping .

I prefer shopping in stores to online shopping for clothes and shoes.

On the same page

Meaning: Agree about something.

Examples:

I don't think we're on the same page here. We can't even agree on what the problem is.

I want to be on the same page about what chores Tom should be doing around the house. We need to be united about this.

I want to spend some time getting on the same page about our goals for the upcoming year.

Out of the loop

Meaning: Not knowing some important information.

Examples:

I'm out of the loop . Can you please bring me up to speed on what you've been working on the last two weeks?

How did I not hear about that? I can't believe I'm so out of the loop !

Can we please keep Keith out of the loop on this? You know how he likes to take projects like this over and ruin them.

Parking ticket

Meaning: A fine you have to pay for parking illegally.

Examples:

I don't think you can park here. You'll for sure get a parking ticket .

Isn't that your car over there? A guy is giving you a parking ticket right now.

If you don't pay parking tickets on time, you get charged more later.

Plenty of fish in the sea

Meaning: There are many eligible people to date.

Examples:

Hey buddy, don't worry about it. There are plenty of fish in the sea.

I know that everyone always says that there are plenty of fish in the sea but it doesn't feel like that right now! I keep meeting these terrible people online.

You'll find a new boyfriend in no time at all. There are plenty of fish in the sea .

Quick snack

Meaning: Something small and easy to eat between meals.

Examples:

I need to grab a quick snack before we go. I skipped lunch today.

Let's stop at that gas station for a quick snack . I'm going to be so hungry by the time we get home.

I'll pack up some things for a quick snack while we're driving. Hopefully, we can avoid stopping for a long time at a restaurant. I just want to get there quickly.

Quit his job

Meaning: Gave notice that he would stop working at his job.

Examples :

I can't believe Tom quit his job . Do you know why?

I'm thinking about quitting my job but I'm worried that I might not find another one.

I wish we could quit our jobs and travel the world!

Rising sea levels

Meaning: How the level of the ocean is increasing year after year.

Examples:

Some small islands will be completely underwater in a few years because of rising sea levels .

One of the consequences of global warming is rising sea levels.

Rising sea levels happen because of the polar ice caps melting.

Collocations Review #2

keep in touch, last minute, parking ticket, make a mess, make some suggestions, rising sea levels, mutual friend, needle in a haystack, on the same page

I want to make sure that we're _____ about the plans for this weekend.

If you _____, that's okay but you'll need to clean it up.

Burning fossil fuels is the main cause of _____.

Can I _____? I think we should cut out this part and add something about the history.

I know it's kind of _____, but do you want to go out for dinner tonight?

I recognize you. Isn't Keith our _____? Were you at his Christmas party?

Why don't we _____ and make a plan to get together in a month or two?

Answers

on the same page

make a mess

rising sea levels

make some suggestions

last minute

mutual friend

keep in touch

Rubs me the wrong way

Meaning: Something that annoys or irritates.

Examples:

Tom just rubs me the wrong way . I'm not sure why but I just don't like talking to that guy.

You know what rubs me the wrong way ? It's politicians who talk a good game but then have all these sketchy things they do behind closed doors.

My new neighbor rubs me the wrong way . He's always smoking in his front yard and the smoke goes into my open windows.

Seen better days

Meaning: In poor/bad condition.

Examples:

Don't buy that car. It's seen better days and you're going to have so many problems with it.

That condo complex has seen better days. It doesn't look like it's been maintained well.

Tom has seen better days. He's not fit to lead our company.

Stay safe

Meaning: Take caution to not get into trouble or danger.

Examples:

The important thing is to stay safe. Never put yourself in danger trying to help someone else.

Stay safe , okay? The roads are icy tonight.

If you want to stay safe when travelling, a good general rule is to not go out alone at night.

Take action

Meaning: Do something.

Examples:

It's time to take action on climate change. The time for talking about the issue is over.

She's a take action kind of woman.

Why don't you take some action ? Just ask her out on a date.

Take a look

Meaning: Examine.

Examples:

I can take a look at your report before you hand it in if you want.

Let me take a look at your car. I don't know that much about cars but maybe it's just a simple problem that I can fix.

Let me take a look at that cavity of yours. Please open your mouth.

Take notes

Meaning: Attend a lecture (or meeting) and write down the main points.

Examples:

Can you please take notes at the meeting today? I'd appreciate it.

Take note of how he does things. He's so efficient and I think we can learn a lot from him.

Did you take notes during class today? Can you please let me take a look at them? I had to miss class.

Take things slowly

Meaning: To not move quickly.

Examples:

Can we please take things slowly ? I haven't dated anyone in a long time.

Let's take things slowly with this new product. We need to prove that there's a market for it before producing way too many units.

When you start training for a marathon, take things slowly at first. It's easy to get injured.

These days

Meaning: Recently; now.

Examples :

What are you up to these days ?

These days , I've been taking it easy and working less overtime.

You're not looking well these days. Is something wrong?

The wrong impression

Meaning: To think wrongly about someone, based on a first meeting.

Examples:

You might have the wrong impression of me. I'm usually very efficient but I've been sick for the last few weeks.

I think you have the wrong impression of Jenny. People usually like working with her. What happened between you two?

Maybe I have the wrong impression , but it just didn't seem like she was that interested in going on another date.

Unemployment rate

Meaning: The number of people without jobs measured against the total workforce (listed as a percentage).

Examples:

The unemployment rate in Canada skyrocketed at the beginning of the pandemic.

What's the unemployment rate among youth in Alberta these days?

One of the major indicators of the overall economy is the unemployment rate.

Up and running

Meaning: Get started and then continuing.

Examples :

Is your business up and running yet? Do you have a website?

Let's get this pool up and running . Spring has sprung and it'll be warm enough to swim soon!

I have a difficult time getting up and running on weekend mornings. I just want to sleep in.

Washing the dishes

Meaning: Cleaning plates, pots, etc.

Examples :

Please wash your dishes and don't leave them out on the counter.

I hated washing dishes when I worked in a restaurant.

I know it's weird, but I find washing the dishes quite a relaxing chore.

Weather forecast

Meaning: Weather prediction for the next hours or days.

Examples:

What's the weather forecast showing for next weekend? We might have to postpone our BBQ.

Let's take a look at the weather forecast . It might be too hot to go hiking on Sunday.

The weather forecast calls for rain all week.

Worried sick

Meaning: Anxious or stressed out to the extreme.

Examples:

I'm worried sick about my dad. He's in the ICU with Covid.

Jen is worried sick about the SAT. She wants to get into Harvard.

I'm worried sick about money since I lost my job. I may have to sell my house and rent.

Collocations Review #3

puts me the wrong way , weather forecast, worried sick, seen better days, stay safe, the wrong impression, take notes, stay safe, take action

Please _____. The roads are icy.

Can you please _____ during the meeting?

Do you think I have _____ of Ted? I like him but other people say he's creepy.

What's the _____ say? Good for hiking on Saturday?

I'm _____ about my Dad since he had a heart attack.

Wow! You look like you've _____. What's up? Do you need help?

I just don't like that new guy. He _____.

We need to _____ on climate change.

Answers

stay safe

take notes

the wrong impression

weather forecast

worried sick

seen better days

rubs me the wrong way

take action

American English Slang

A flick

Meaning: A movie.

Examples:

Why don't we catch a flick this weekend? I haven't been to the theater in a long time.

Have you seen any flicks lately?

I watched a few flicks this weekend. Nothing special. It was so rainy.

Bad guy

Meaning: Someone who always has bad news/enforces a rule.

Examples:

Please get the kids to put away their stuff after school too! I hate always being the bad guy.

I hate to be the bad guy here but everyone needs to show up for work on time.

He wasn't a bad guy but he was just boring. We had nothing to talk about on our second and third dates.

Bail

Meaning: Leave; depart.

Examples:

Let's bail. It's getting late and I have to work in the morning.

Keith always bails early. I don't know why we keep inviting him.

Let's go. We can bail if it turns out to be boring.

Blow off some steam

Meaning: Relax; let loose.

Examples:

I want to blow off some steam this weekend. I've been working way too hard this week!

Let's blow off some steam after work. I'll buy you a beer?

I do want to blow off some steam after work but I'm also so tired and need to have an early night I think.

Brings the hammer down

Meaning: Punishes.

Examples :

You need to bring the hammer down on those guys. They are taking longer and longer lunch breaks.

My teacher brought the hammer down on my class and failed most of us on our last essay.

It's time to bring the hammer down on the kids. They are getting lazier and lazier about doing their chores.

Bummed

Meaning: Feeling let down about something.

Examples :

I'm so bummed about Ted breaking up with me. I had no idea he was going to do that.

Are you bummed about your company going bankrupt? I know you hated that job anyway.

I'm bummed that the concert got cancelled.

Catch some rays

Meaning: Go outside in the sun.

Examples:

I want to catch some rays this weekend at the park. Hopefully, the sun comes out!

Wow! You caught some rays on your vacation. Didn't you use sunscreen?

I don't understand why everyone likes to catch some rays at the beach. Aren't they worried about skin cancer?

Chill out

Meaning: Relax.

Examples:

Hey, chill out ! I know you don't like Nancy but there will lots of other people there. You don't even need to talk to her.

Let's just chill out at home tonight. I'm so tired from going out all the time.

I don't know what to do about Bob. He just likes to chill out every day after school playing video games and eating junk food. His grades are terrible.

Cool

Meaning: Hip; awesome; great.

Examples:

That's cool about your new job!

He's so worried about being cool these days with his new clothes and fancy car.

You look so cool with those sunglasses!

Cops

Meaning: Police officers.

Examples :

Should we call the cops ? They're being so loud and it's 2 am.

What are all the cops doing here? I wonder what's going on.

Tony wants to be a cop when he's done university but I'm a bit worried because I think it's quite a dangerous job.

Couch potatoes

Meaning: People who aren't that active, instead preferring to sit on the couch and watch TV or play video games.

Examples:

Tommy is such a couch potato ! He just plays video games and eats junk food all weekend. I've given up on him ever doing anything with me.

I want to be a couch potato this weekend. My job is so busy now with Covid-19.

I was a real couch potato in my 20's but I turned it around when I turned 30 and started training for a marathon.

Crashed

Meaning: Suddenly had no energy.

Examples:

I crashed hard this weekend. I'd been staying up so late studying for finals.

I just want to crash after work today. Watch some Netflix and eat popcorn.

Sammy crashed last night at 7:00. She swam so hard at her competition.

Drives me up the wall

Meaning: Makes me crazy; annoys.

Examples:

You know what drives me up the wall ? People who are slow-walkers.

Tony drives me up the wall . He's so gross—he clips his toenails at his desk!

Sidney drives me up the wall with her phone. She gets so many notifications and never puts her phone on silent.

Dumped

Meaning: Broken up with.

Examples:

Did you hear that Ted dumped Chris?

I'm usually the one that dumps people instead of them dumping me.

Julie dumped me last week. I'm so sad about it.

Feeling under the weather

Meaning: Not feeling well; feeling sick.

Examples:

I've been feeling under the weather lately but I'm not sure why.

Tom is feeling a bit under the weather today. I think I'm going to keep him home from school.

Lots of people are under the weather at work. It happens every winter though during flu season.

Getting by

Meaning: Describes someone who can pay the bills but doesn't have a lot of extra money.

Examples:

Sam is just getting by. Rent is so expensive in Vancouver.

I'm tired of just getting by. I think I need to go back to school so I can get a better job.

Many people are barely getting by in New York. The minimum wage is quite low and housing is expensive.

Slang Review #1

a flick, bad guys, bail, blow off some steam, catch some rays, chill out, cops, couch potato, drives me up the wall, dump, getting by

My husband is such a _____. It's impossible to get him to even go for a walk with me.

You know what _____? TV commercials.

Sorry, I have to _____. My boss just told me that I need to work late.

Hey buddy, _____. The bar is going to call the _____ on us.

Do you want to go kayaking on Sunday and _____?

I think I might _____ Tom. We've been fighting so much lately.

Lindsey and Sam are just _____ I think. I don't think they can afford to come with us.

This movie is so boring. The police chase the _____. That's it!

Answers

couch potato

drives me up the wall

bail

chill out, cops

catch some rays

dump

getting by

bad guys

Ghosted

Meaning: Suddenly stopped responding to messages without explanation, usually in a dating relationship.

Examples :

I can't believe he ghosted me after we went out on 3 dates. I have no idea what happened.

I think it's okay to ghost someone if you haven't met them yet. No explanation is needed if you've only been chatting online.

Ghosting is so terrible! You should just be honest and say something if you don't want to continue seeing someone.

Grab

Meaning: Get; pick up.

Examples :

Wait a second. I have to grab my jacket before we go.

Let's grab some sushi and eat it at the park tonight? It's so beautiful outside.

Can we grab some snacks and drinks before we go? I haven't eaten dinner yet.

Hang out

Meaning: Spend time with someone.

Examples:

Do you want to hang out this weekend? I think I'm free all day Saturday.

I hung out with Tommy last night. I haven't seen him in a long time!

I think Jill and I are hanging out on Friday night if you want to join us?

Hangry

Meaning: Hungry + angry combined.

Examples:

Ethan gets so hangry after school so I always bring him a snack for the car on the way home.

I start to get hangry by lunchtime if I only eat a smoothie for breakfast.

I'm hangry ! Can we stop and grab a sushi roll or something?

Hit the books

Meaning: Studied.

Examples:

Sorry, no drinks for me tonight. I have to hit the books for my CPA exam. It's next Tuesday.

I'm done hitting the books ! I never want to take another exam ever.

I hit the books hard last night and ended up staying up until 3 am.

Hold out

Meaning: Wait.

Examples:

I think we can hold out for a better offer. We're not desperate to sell.

Don't hold out too long! Someone else is going to put an offer in for sure.

I held out for a better salary offer for my job and it all ended up working out.

Hooked

Meaning: Addicted.

Examples:

I'm so hooked on coffee. I can't make it through a day without drinking it.

Ted and I are hooked on soda but we're trying to gradually reduce how much we drink.

If you're hooked on smoking from a young age, it can be very difficult to quit.

Killed it

Meaning: Did well at something.

Examples:

You killed it this afternoon! You must have been practicing a lot since we last played.

I want to kill it on my exam. That's why I'm studying so much.

You're killing it ! Keep going.

Like riding a bike

Meaning: Describes something that you can easily do after many years of not doing it.

Examples:

You'll get the hang of it. Don't worry. It's just like riding a bike .

Playing tennis is like riding a bike . If you learned the proper strokes when you were young, it'll come back to you in no time at all.

Have fun and chill out about it! It's like riding a bike .

Maxed out

Meaning: At capacity.

Examples:

Sorry, I can't help you. I'm maxed out already.

I can't take any more clients. I'm maxed out with the ones I already have.

I m ax out at around 10 clients at a time.

Out of the loop

Meaning: Not knowing some information.

Examples:

I'm so out of the loop! I can't believe that I didn't know Tim and Carrie broke up.

I honestly like being out of the loop when it comes to work gossip. Nothing good comes of being in the middle of that stuff.

I hate being out of the loop so I'm constantly checking my phone.

Pain in the neck

Meaning: Describes someone annoying or bothersome.

Examples:

That side-job of mine is a real pain in the neck . I never find out my schedule until the very last minute.

Sarah is a pain in the neck. She just asks so many questions during meetings about things that we've already talked about. She's just on her phone all the time and doesn't listen.

My dog is a pain in the neck . He chews anything and everything, including couches, shoes, and jackets.

Peanuts

Meaning: A small amount of money.

Examples :

I'm tired of working for peanuts . I have to find a better-paying job.

I understand that you want to help people but those kinds of jobs pay peanuts . You'll have a hard time surviving in Toronto on that salary.

He charges peanuts . Why is he so much cheaper than the competition?

Pissed Off

Meaning: Angry.

Examples:

Wow. Bob is so pissed off at Kim for showing up late again.

I was pissed off at Ted this weekend. He said he'd help me clean the garage but he wouldn't stop playing video games.

I get pissed off when people drive under the speed limit.

Pitch in

Meaning: To contribute to or help with something.

Examples:

If we all pitch in , it'll take under an hour I think.

We can all pitch in and help you move. You don't need to hire a company. They're so expensive!

Can anyone pitch in a few dollars for this charity campaign? They need our help.

Roll

Meaning: Go somewhere.

Examples:

Let's roll. I'm tired and still need to drive home.

Are you ready to roll ?

It's time to roll ! We agreed to leave at 9:00, remember?

Running out of gas

Meaning: Getting tired.

Examples :

Can we take a break? I'm running out of gas.

I'm running out of gas on this project. Let's call it a day and start fresh tomorrow.

If you're running out of gas , why don't you just go to bed? You'll do better on a good night's sleep.

Slang Review #2

ghosted, hang out, pain in the neck, hangry, hold out, hooked, maxed out, peanuts, roll, pitch in, pissed off

I'd love to _____ again if you're up for it.

That job pays _____. I think you could do better.

If we all _____, we can clean this place up in under an hour.

Sorry, I'm _____ this week. I think I have some openings for next week though.

That dog next door is a _____.

Have you ever been _____?

I'm starting to get _____. Can we stop for some lunch?

I'm so _____ on coffee. I could never quit.

Answers

hang out

peanuts

pitch in

maxed out

pain in the neck

ghosted

hangry

hooked

Sketchy

Meaning: Describes someone who can't be trusted.

Examples:

Don't driving in that part of town. It's super sketchy .

I went out on a date with that guy I met online but he was sketchy . I pretended I was going to the bathroom and just left.

That supplier is sketchy . Do you think he's selling us stolen goods?

Straight up

Meaning: Honestly.

Examples:

I think it's always best to be straight up with people. Who doesn't want to know the truth, right?

Kerry is very straight up which makes him a great boss. You know exactly what you need to do to improve your performance. He never sugar coats anything.

To be straight up here, I don't think we can continue with this contract next year. Your performance hasn't been up to standard.

Sucked

Meaning: Describes something terrible.

Examples:

That movie sucked ! I feel like I've wasted 2 hours of my life that I can never get back.

I used to suck at swimming but I took some lessons and now don't have to stop after every single lap.

My first job at a fast food restaurant sucked . The pay was so low and I had to clean the disgusting grease traps.

Third wheel

Meaning: Describes someone who is spending time with a couple.

Examples:

I would love to see that movie but I don't want to be the third wheel .

I don't mind being the third wheel with Will and Sidney. They always make an effort to include me in conversations.

I went over for dinner but Ted cancelled at the last minute so I ended up being the third wheel. It was uncomfortable.

Vanilla

Meaning: Boring; not interesting.

Examples:

I went on a date with a guy last night but it was so boring. He's very vanilla.

That town is full of vanilla people. I moved away when I was 18.

I don't think vanilla is terrible for a boyfriend. People like that are often reliable and trustworthy.

Went down

Meaning: Happened.

Examples:

What went down with you and Jenny? You used to be the best of friends.

Some bad stuff went down at my company last month and I don't think I can continue working there. I'm going to quit as soon as I can find a new job.

Nothing bad went down . I just got kind of bored with him and knew it was time to break up. That's it!

Slang Review #3

sketchy, killed it , sucked, straight up, third wheel, vanilla, went down, run out of gas, pissed off, out of the loop

Seriously, you _____ on that presentation. Nicely done!

I'm not sure what _____ between those two but they hate each other.

I'm starting to _____. Can we take a quick coffee break?

I like to be _____ with people. I know, it's a bit unusual but it works for me.

I'm so _____ for the office gossip. Honestly though, I haven't missed it!

Are you going to go camping with them? You're not scared of being the _____?

I'm so _____ at my husband. He just bought a new car without talking to me about it.

He's _____. You need to break up with him.

Answers

killed it

went down

run out of gas

straight up

out of the loop

third wheel

pissed off

vanilla

Phrasal Verbs

Asking out

Meaning: Inviting someone to go on a date.

Examples:

I'm thinking about asking Samantha out . Do you think she'd say yes?

Did you hear that Danny asked out Tina and she said yes? I'm so happy for him!

I get so nervous asking a girl out . I'm way better at doing it via text than in person.

Battle it out

Meaning: Fight until there's a winner.

Examples:

Tom and Cam battle it out to the death over their new video game console. I don't understand why they don't just play two-player games.

You guys don't need to battle it out . Just do rock-scissor-paper to figure out who the winner is.

The Oilers and the Leafs are battling it out for first place in their division.

Blow me off

Meaning: Not pay attention to; disregard.

Examples:

I hate how Sam blows me off every time I ask for time off or need something from him at work.

You can't keep blowing me off . You'll eventually have to answer for what you did.

I get the feeling that Cara is blowing me off. She keeps cancelling our plans at the last possible minute.

Break out

Meaning: Deploy or start to use something.

Examples:

Let's break out the wine! It's the afternoon now, right?

I want to break out that game we bought last year. Settlers? We haven't even played it yet.

Why don't you break out some of those homemade pickles of yours? I love those things.

Call her up

Meaning: Phone her.

Examples:

Just call her up if you want to talk to her. It's obvious that you miss her.

I think you'll have to call him up . He doesn't respond to texts very often.

Call them up and just ask. You've already wasted so much time looking on their website. I don't think it's there.

Carried away

Meaning: Do something to an excessive degree.

Examples:

Don't get carried away here. I have a feeling that this project is going to get cancelled.

My kids get carried away with this new video game and before they know it, it's dinnertime and they're upset that they have to stop.

I get a bit carried away with Christmas decorations every year.

Check in

Meaning: See how someone is doing.

Examples:

When do you go for surgery? Next Thursday? I'll check in on Friday to see if you need anything.

I'm just calling to check in . How are you doing with everything?

Hey, I'm just checking in to see if you need anything before I leave for the night.

Chicken out

Meaning: Not do something due to nervousness.

Examples:

I was going to ask out Todd but I chickened out at the last minute.

Don't chicken out this time! You'll pass your test. You're ready.

I get so nervous about taking the driver's test that I always chicken out and cancel at the last minute.

Come across

Meaning: Give an impression; find.

Examples:

Did you come across any errors in the code? Something isn't quite right but I can't figure out what it is.

Ted came across as kind of a jerk. He barely even looked at me when Tina was introducing me to him.

If you come across any small canning jars at the thrift store, please buy them for me.

Come around

Meaning: Change your mind.

Examples :

He'll come around . Don't worry about it.

I'm worried that my boss won't come around to me working fewer hours.

She didn't want to go to Korea for vacation but she came around after I showed her how awesome it is there!

Come through

Meaning: Succeed at doing something.

Examples:

Don't worry. Keith is going to come through for us. He always does.

I know that I procrastinate, but I always come through in the end so please try not to worry about it.

Do you think Mary is going to come through with that donation? I haven't heard from her in a few days now.

Cut it out

Meaning: Stop doing something.

Examples:

Ted! Cut it out ! I don't want to hear you yelling inside the house.

I know you're not trying to be annoying but tapping your pen like that is driving me up the wall. Please cut it out.

Hey! Cut it out . I don't want to see you chewing with your mouth open.

Dealing with

Meaning: Handling.

Examples:

Can you please deal with this client? I'm so angry right now that I don't think I can do it and keep my cool.

I hate dealing with difficult customers at my job. Most of them are great but there are a few that ruin my day.

I'm dealing with so many things right now. Can you please give me a call tomorrow and I'll have more time to talk about it then?

Dress it up

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

Examples:

You don't have to dress it up for me. I'd rather know the truth.

Let's dress it up a little before we present it to Kristina. You know how she'll just reject it unless it's pretty.

I hate dressing things up to cover up for an inferior product. I'd rather work for a company that just has better products to start with.

End up

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

Examples:

Stay in school if you don't want to end up like Steve.

I don't want to end up with no job. I think I should just accept this one.

What if we end up not being able to sell this place in a year or two? I think we should put it on the market now before things fall apart.

Fall apart

Meaning: Break down.

Examples:

My work clothes are starting to fall apart . I need to buy some new ones.

I'm going to fall apart soon if I don't get some help here. You needed to hire new people months ago.

This house is falling apart . I told you that we shouldn't have bought such an old place.

Fall behind

Meaning: Not keep up to others.

Examples:

Min-Ji is starting to fall behind in math. I think we should get her a private tutor.

I'm falling behind and will need to work this weekend I think. Hopefully, I can get caught up if I do that.

During the race, I fell behind the leaders about halfway through and just couldn't match their pace.

Fight back

Meaning: Counterattack in a fight or battle.

Examples:

It's time to fight back against climate change. It's probably too late already! That's my biggest fear.

You can fight back in this situation. Why don't you talk to someone higher up in the company? I think it might help.

I want to fight back against these rumours. They aren't true and we're starting to get a bad reputation in the community because of them.

Phrasal Verbs Review #1

ask her out, fight back, blew me off, break out, falling apart, end up, deal with, cut it out, check in, call up, chickened out

Sorry, I can't come tonight. I have to _____ this thing at work.

Let's _____ that wine we got from your work. It looks expensive!

I can't believe Ted _____ again last night. I'm so tired of trying to make plans with him.

Hey, _____! I just need a few minutes of quiet.

I want to _____ but I _____ at the last minute.

The project is _____ since Tony went on vacation.

Why don't you _____ Tracy and see if she's free for dinner tonight?

Let's _____ with your cousin. Didn't he move last weekend?

Answers

deal with

break out

blew me off

cut it out

ask her out, chickened out

falling apart

call up

check in

Get ahead of yourself

Meaning: Look too far ahead; not focus on the initial things.

Examples :

Don't you think you're starting to get ahead of yourself ? Just worry about the next step and not the million other ones that will come later.

I always get ahead of myself with work projects and feel so stressed out.

You're getting ahead of yourself here. The first step is applying and if you don't get in, then you can deal with it then.

Get away with

Meaning: To do something bad but not receive punishment for it.

Examples:

I know that my kids think they can get away with so many things but I always know. I just don't bust them on everything.

Just because you can get away with it, doesn't mean that you should. You'll eventually get caught I think.

I got away with taking 2-hour lunch breaks for so many years at work. It was only when I got a new boss that I had to stop.

Get it over with

Meaning: Do something that you don't want to do.

Examples:

Just get it over with . Then you can enjoy the rest of your vacation.

I know you don't want to but it's better to get it over with than leave it to the last minute. That's so stressful to do that.

Come on. Let's get it over with . It'll only take us a couple of hours once we finally do it.

Go after

Meaning: Pursue someone or something.

Examples:

If you want to get into law school, you have to go after it. It won't be easy but I think that you can do it.

Go after what you want in life! Don't just sit back and wait for things to happen.

Go after your dream job! The worst that can happen is that you won't get it.

Go for it

Meaning: Encouraging someone to do something.

Examples:

I think you should go for it! It'll all work out in the end.

If you want that job, go for it. The worst that can happen is that they decide to hire someone else.

I'm going to go for it ! I'm tired of waiting for things to happen to me. I want to make my own luck.

Goofing around

Meaning: Being silly or joking with someone.

Examples:

Stop goofing around ! We need to get this kitchen cleaned up.

Tom and Jenny always start goofing around before bedtime and end up going to bed way too late.

I loved goofing around during class when I was a kid. My teachers must have hated me.

Grow up

Meaning: Get bigger or older.

Examples:

When I grow up , I want to be a firefighter.

When I was growing up , my parents got divorced and I spent time at both of their houses.

My brother and I grew up too quickly. My father died when we were young.

Hanging over

Meaning: Feeling upset or worried about something.

Examples :

Just finish it. It's been hanging over you for years now.

Do you think that Tom has a black cloud hanging over him? He's always grumpy about something.

This thesis is hanging over me. I'm not sure it'll ever be done.

Hang on

Meaning: Wait.

Examples:

Hang on a minute! I need to pack my lunch before we go.

Can you hang on for a minute? I'm just talking to your aunt on the phone right now.

If you can hang on for 10 minutes or so while I finish this up, I can drive you home.

Hit up

Meaning: Ask someone for something, usually a favour.

Examples:

Guess who hit me up this week? Ted! He wanted to borrow money again.

Why don't you hit up your company to see if they'll make a donation? Don't they do this kind of thing regularly?

Hit up your Dad for that. I don't have any cash right now.

Hold back

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

Examples:

Don't hold back . Just tell me straight up what you want.

You have to hold back sometimes. You often get in trouble for saying things too bluntly.

Hold back a bit. Let's wait and see what they do first before we reveal too much.

Lighten up

Meaning: Relax; not take things so seriously.

Examples:

Hey, lighten up . This isn't a big deal.

Dad! Lighten up ! I don't know why you care so much if my room is clean, or not.

I wish you'd lighten up a bit on the kids about chores. They're already stressed out about all their schoolwork.

Look around

Meaning: Check out the items or a location.

Examples:

Have a look around . Let me know if you need help.

I'm going to have a look around and I'll let you know if I need anything.

Have a look around your room first. I think I last saw it here.

Look forward to

Meaning: Await something eagerly.

Examples:

I look forward to meeting you next week!

We're looking forward to going to Disneyland next year.

I've been looking forward to this concert for months now.

Look up

Meaning: Find something in a book or on the Internet, etc.

Examples:

Let me look up that phone number for you.

Do you want me to look it up ? It'll just take me 10 seconds.

I'll have to look up my ID number. I can't remember off the top of my head.

Narrow down

Meaning: Eliminate some possible options.

Examples:

I think we can narrow it down to either Sid or Sandra.

When you're doing a multiple choice test, narrow down the answers to the two most likely ones if you don't know.

We've narrowed down the options to either Fiji or Thailand.

Point out

Meaning: Highlight or feature.

Examples:

Let me point out all the things it can do. For example, . . .

Can you point out to me where all the used ones are? That's what I'm most interested in.

If I could point out the key features. The first one is . . .

Rule him out

Meaning: To eliminate, cancel, or discount someone (or something).

Examples:

I don't want to rule her out for that one mistake but it's difficult for me to overlook it.

I think we can rule him out . He doesn't even have the minimum qualifications.

Don't rule it out ! It's a great program and the tuition is way cheaper than other colleges.

Phrasal Verbs Review #2

get ahead of yourself , rule out, get it over with, point out, go for it, goofing around, hit up, hang on, lighten up, look around

I think we can _____ Sammy, right? He doesn't have enough experience.

Hey, _____! I don't think it's a big deal.

Let's just _____. I don't want to think about it anymore.

Stop _____ and just clean up your rooms. We're not going anywhere until you finish.

_____ a second. Didn't we already do that one?

Let's have a _____ first before buying one. I'm sure there's one in the garage somewhere.

_____! That's your dream job and it'd be crazy not to apply.

Please _____ that coffee shop you like. Aren't we driving right by it?

Answers

rule out

lighten up

get it over with

goofing around

hang on

look around

go for it

point out

Screwed up

Meaning: Not do something successfully.

Examples:

Sorry, I screwed u p. How can I make it up to you?

I screwed up my driving test three times before I finally passed.

Can you please look this paperwork over before I submit it? I'm worried that I screwed it up and I don't want it to get rejected again.

Slow down

Meaning: Don't move so quickly.

Examples:

Let's slow down here. It's easy to make mistakes with this kind of thing when going too quickly.

Please slow down . I think you're driving way too quickly. The roads are icy.

Can we slow down a bit? This relationship is getting serious too quickly.

Sneak in

Meaning: Being able to do something even though you're busy; go someplace you're not supposed to go.

Examples :

Do you think we can sneak in without paying? I've heard of people doing it.

I think I can sneak in a workout between work and dinner.

Let's sneak in at the last second. I hate making small talk before the meeting.

Spare you

Meaning: Save from dealing with or hearing about.

Examples :

I'll spare you the details but I'll just say that their divorce was so messy.

Spare me the excuses! I'm so tired of them.

I'll take care of it and spare you from dealing with the scary spiders!

Stick around

Meaning: Stay.

Examples :

Stick around after the meeting, okay? I'd love to catch up.

Can you stick around to help clean up after the event? I'd appreciate it.

I'm happy I stuck around after the concert. I got to meet the whole band and they signed my shirt.

Stick to

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

Examples:

I need to stick to my diet. My cheat day is on Friday, not Monday.

Just stick to the schedule, please. I don't want to make any changes because then I will have to change everyone's schedule.

Stick to the facts here!

Talk me into

Meaning: Convince.

Examples:

You're not going to talk me into this. I've already made up my mind about it.

My kids always try to talk me into going to the movies. It works though! We usually end up going almost every weekend.

You could probably talk me into it!

Think about

Meaning: Consider.

Examples:

I'll think about it. That doesn't mean yes. It just means that I'm open to it.

Think about your future! If you keep failing classes, what kind of job can you get?

I have to think about my son, too. I'm not sure changing schools is the best thing for him right now.

Turn down

Meaning: Refuse.

Examples :

I hate to turn down an offer for lunch but I'm so busy this week.

I had to turn down that offer on my place. They wanted weeks to complete the inspections.

You know that you can turn down overtime, right? I don't know why you keep agreeing to it when you hate it so much.

Turned out

Meaning: Finding out the result of something.

Examples:

In the end, it all turned out well. It was stressful though.

It's all going to turn out okay! You'll see.

It turned out that that guy Bob I was dating was already married and had a whole life in Toronto.

Wear me down

Meaning: Make me feel tired and weary.

Examples:

My job is starting to wear me down. There's more and more to do as the year comes to an end.

My kids think they can wear me down if they keep asking for that new video game system. How wrong they are!

I need to exercise or I can't sleep. I need something to wear me down so I can finally relax.

Work something out

Meaning: Make a deal.

Examples:

I'm confident that we can work something out . Let me talk to my boss and see what she says.

Can we work something out here? We are not that far apart in our offers.

Please work something out with that supplier. There's no excuse for them to deliver products days late.

Phrasal Verbs Review #3

screwed up, slow down , think about, stick to, turned out, wear down, work something out, talk me into, looking forward to, hold back

Please _____. The speed limit is 60 km/hour here.

The movies? You could _____ it.

I think I _____ at work today. I hope my boss doesn't find out.

I'm _____ to my trip to Japan next month.

We can _____ on price.

Let's _____ the original plan.

Everything _____ okay in the end.

Don't _____. I'd rather know the truth.

Answers

slow down

talk me into

screwed up

looking forward to

work something out

stick to

turned out

hold back

Before You Go

If you found this book useful, please leave a review wherever you bought it. It will help other English learners like yourself find this resource.

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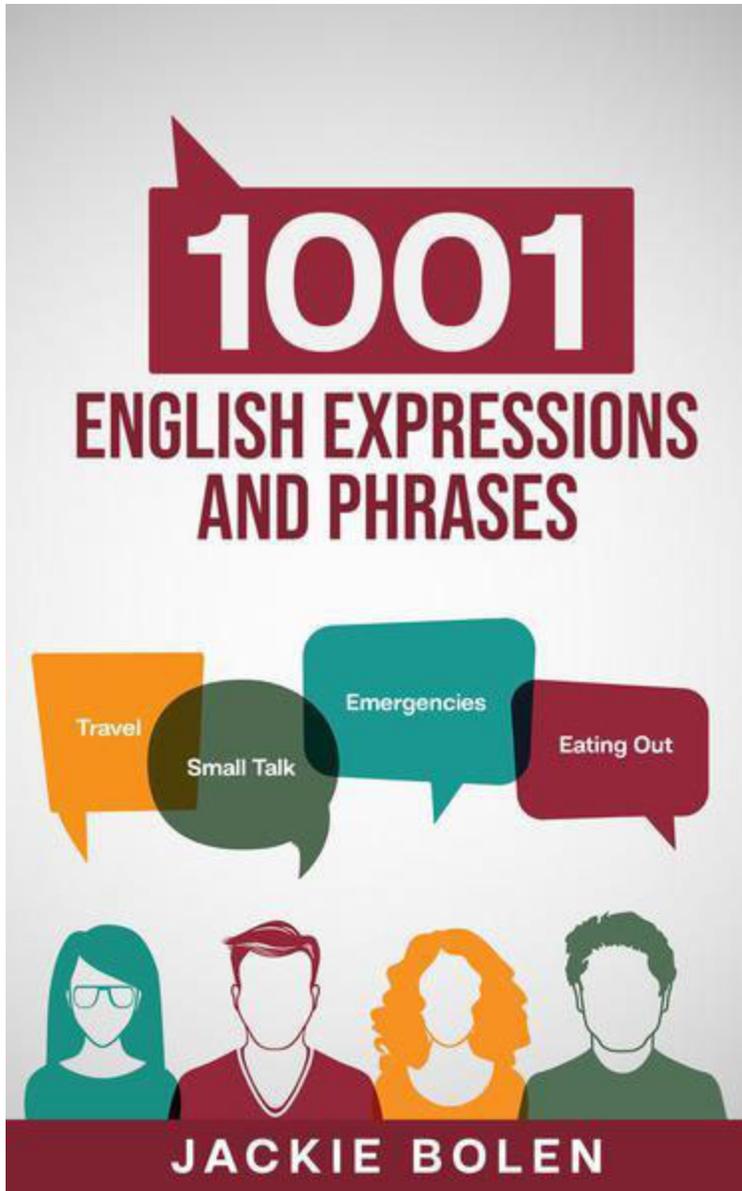
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How to Use this Book

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

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

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

- Review frequently.
- Study a little bit every day instead of everything in one go. You’ll remember a lot more that way. I recommend learning 4-6 new vocabulary words each day. Remember to review them every day until you’ll never forget them!

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

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

About the Author: Jackie Bolen

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

In case you were wondering what my academic qualifications are, I hold a Master of Arts in Psychology. During my time in Korea, I completed both the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA certification programs. With the

combination of almost ten years teaching ESL/EFL learners of all ages and levels, and the more formal teaching qualifications I've obtained, I have a solid foundation on which to offer advice to English learners.

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

Jackie Bolen (www.jackiebolen.com)

Twitter: @bolen_jackie

Email: jb.business.online@gmail.com

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American English Idioms

A bee in my bonnet

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

Examples:

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

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

What's up with Cindy? She has a bee in her bonnet about her neighbor parking in front of her house. I don't think it's a big deal.

Add insult to Injury

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

Examples:

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

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

Talk about adding insult to injury . Did you hear that Carrie broke up with Tim after he lost his job?

A dime a dozen

Meaning: Something that is very common; not special.

Examples:

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

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

Cheap masks are a dime a dozen at this tourist market. I can take you somewhere to find some handmade ones that are much higher quality.

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

Meaning: Someone who is difficult to get to know.

Examples:

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

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

I like her a lot but she's a tough nut to crack . I have to ask her so many questions to find out anything about her.

Ahead of the pack

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

Examples:

I love to be ahead of the pack for the swimming portion of triathlons. Otherwise, you just get kicked in the face a lot.

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

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

A lot on my plate

Meaning: Many responsibilities.

Examples:

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

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

Don't you think you already have too much on your plate ? With your job and the kids, I don't think you'll have time to join that soccer team.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Meaning: Eating healthy keeps you from getting sick.

Examples:

My mother used to say, “ An apple a day keeps the doctor away. ”

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

You know why you're always sick? It's that fast food you eat every day. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

A piece of cake

Meaning: Something that's easy to do.

Examples:

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

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

If you're been paying attention in class, this assignment will be a piece of cake and you should be able to finish in under an hour. If you haven't been paying attention, then I wish you luck!

As far as I can tell

Meaning: To the best of my understanding.

Examples:

We're not going to finish in time, as far as I can tell. Isn't the deadline in 4 hours? We still have at least an entire day of work left.

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

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

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

Meaning: Something difficult to get over or accept.

Examples:

Breaking up with me after I put him through grad school was a bitter pill to swallow.

Getting fired was a tough pill to swallow .

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

At the eleventh hour

Meaning: At the last minute.

Examples:

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

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

I know you're used to me giving you money at the eleventh hour, right before your bills are due, but I'm not going to do it anymore. You'll have to learn how to be responsible for yourself.

Back to square one

Meaning: Starting at the beginning again.

Examples:

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

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

Sorry about that decision. I know you worked hard on that. But, let's get back to square one and try to come up with some fresh ideas.

Bang for the buck

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

Examples:

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

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

I'm looking for a computer that offers a lot of bang for the buck . Macbooks are just too expensive for what they are.

Barking up the wrong tree

Meaning: Blaming the wrong person.

Examples:

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

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

I think we're barking up the wrong tree here. It's not Tim's fault that the suppliers didn't get him the product on time.

Beat around the bush

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

Examples:

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

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

Stop beating around the bush ! Just tell me what you're trying to say here.

Beat me to the punch

Meaning: Say or do something before someone else.

Examples:

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

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

You have to beat him to the punch . Be aggressive and say what you're thinking during those meetings.

Better late than never

Meaning: Encouragement after getting a late start to something.

Examples:

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

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

I for sure thought he wasn't going to finish that project. Better later than never I guess.

Bite the bullet

Meaning: Resolve to do something difficult.

Examples:

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

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

The garage needs some serious organizing. Let's bite the bullet and do it this weekend.

Blow off some steam

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

Examples:

Let him run around outside. He can blow off some steam before dinner.

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

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

Break the bank

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

Examples:

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

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

No, we can't buy that. Tim's tuition is already breaking the bank .

Bring a lot to the table

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

Examples:

You're going to have to bring a lot more to the table if you want us to renew your contract.

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

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

Bring me up to speed

Meaning: Update me or teach me something.

Examples:

Jen brought me up to speed already. No need to go over this stuff again.

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

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

Burning the midnight oil

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

Examples:

We're going to have to burn the midnight oil this week if want to avoid working on the weekend.

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

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

By the book

Meaning: Completely legal, doing something the correct way.

Examples :

You need to do this contract by the book , okay? The government inspectors are watching us carefully since that cover-up last year.

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

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

By the skin of his teeth

Meaning: Just barely succeeding, finishing, etc.

Examples:

We just escaped by the skin of our teeth . The bear had already started chasing us down the trail.

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

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

Idiom Review #1

by the skin of my teeth , bee in his bonnet, brings a lot to the table, beating around the bush, a lot on my plate, an apple a day keeps the doctor away, bang for the buck, barking up the wrong tree, bite the bullet, a tough pill to swallow

Ted _____. I think we need to give him a raise before he leaves.

I like going there but it doesn't offer enough _____.

Stop _____. Just tell me what you want.

I have _____ right now but can I get in touch with you next week? I'll have more time to talk.

I only passed _____. It was a small miracle!

He has _____, doesn't he? I don't understand what the big issue is.

I know you don't want to but you're going to have to _____ and just finish it.

Answers:

brings a lot to the table

bang for the buck

beating around the bush

a lot on my plate

by the skin of my teeth

a bee in his bonnet

bite the bullet

Call it a day

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

Examples:

Why don't we call it a day and get a beer? We've worked hard enough this week!

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

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

Calm before the storm

Meaning: A quiet period before a difficult period.

Examples:

If you think this is difficult, it's only the calm before the storm . Things are going to get much worse after Bob goes on vacation.

I think this is going to be the calm before the storm .

Please rest and recover now. This is the calm before the storm !

Caught between a rock and a hard place

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

Examples:

What are you going to do? You're caught between a rock and a hard place with no good outcome, whatever decision you make.

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

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

Caught me off guard

Meaning: Surprised me.

Examples:

Tammy just said that she wanted to get a divorce. It caught me off guard. I thought we were getting along well.

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

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

Costs a pretty penny

Meaning: Is expensive.

Examples:

Apple products cost a pretty penny but they're worth it. I love not having to buy a new laptop every couple of years. Ones from Apple last at least 5 years.

That new video game system costs a pretty penny .

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

Crack the whip

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

Examples:

You guys know that I hate cracking the whip . Please make sure the work gets done on time, okay?

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

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

Crunch the numbers

Meaning: Analyze data.

Examples:

We're going to have to crunch the numbers to see if it's cheaper to rent or buy a place in Vancouver. I have a feeling that buying might be cheaper if we can afford a down payment.

Let's crunch the numbers and see if we can figure this out.

I crunched the numbers and it looks like we'll be \$2000 over budget.

Don't see eye to eye

Meaning: Disagree with someone.

Examples:

When I was growing up, I didn't see eye to eye with my dad. We understand each other a lot better now though.

My boss and I just don't see eye to eye .

Her teacher keeps getting mad at her for talking during class. I think they don't see eye to eye.

Fall through the cracks

Meaning: Overlook something.

Examples:

My son has autism and falls through the cracks in the public school system. My wife and I are considering moving him to a private school.

Please don't let this fall through the cracks . It's too important.

I'm worried about this falling through the cracks , so let's make a note in our calendars to check on our progress in two weeks

Food for thought

Meaning: Something to think about.

Examples:

I mean you've given me some food for thought but I don't think that I'm ever going to change my mind about this.

Interesting idea. It's certainly some food for thought .

Thanks so much for your very interesting presentation. There was lots of food for thought in it.

From rags to riches

Meaning: Going from poor to rich.

Examples:

Have you seen that new movie with Will Smith? It's based on a true rags to riches story.

I love that story of that guy who went from rags to riches in just a couple of years.

I'm hoping I'll be one of those rags to riches stories with this new business I just started.

Get down to business

Meaning: Start working.

Examples:

Stop fooling around! We need to get down to business if we want to get packed up and leave by 9:00.

Let's get down to business . This meeting is only scheduled for an hour.

It's time to get down to business and finish this project up.

Get the ball rolling

Meaning: Start something.

Examples:

Let's get the ball rolling on this project. Time is of the essence.

We didn't get the ball rolling fast enough and our competitors came out with a similar product before we did.

Don't you think that we're already playing catch up? I'm not sure why we're only just getting the ball rolling now . We should have started months ago.

Give them a run for their money

Meaning: Provide good competition.

Examples:

I know that it'll be difficult but I think we can give them a run for their money and at least take some market

I think we can give them a run for their money if we play well.

Wow! The Blue Jays gave the Yankees a run for their money .

Go out on a limb

Meaning: To take a risk.

Examples:

I think you'll need to go out on a limb and take a few risks if you want to succeed in this industry.

I usually avoid going out on a limb during meetings and just keep my opinion to myself. It's not worth it.

You went out on a limb there! Weren't you scared of saying that?

Idiom Review #2

going out on a limb , food for thought, get the ball rolling, from rags to riches, caught me off guard, call it a day, aren't seeing eye to eye, crunch the numbers, crack the whip, bring me up to speed, blow off some steam, fall through the cracks, beat me to the punch, at the eleventh hour

Cindy _____ when she told me that she was getting divorced.

It's time to _____! This place needs to get cleaned up before we go to the movies tonight.

I may be _____ here but I can't be the only one who thinks this is a bad idea.

My wife and I _____ lately. I'm not sure if things are going to get better or we'll get divorced.

I need to _____. Why don't we _____ and grab a beer?

Make sure this doesn't _____. It's key to this whole project.

Funding came through _____.

Answers

caught me off guard

crack the whip

going out on a limb

aren't seeing eye to eye

blow off some steam, call it a day

fall through the cracks

at the eleventh hour

Go the extra mile

Meaning: Work very hard to do a good job. Doing something extra than is expected.

Examples:

You're going to have to go the extra mile if you want to get your contract renewed. They have very high expectations at that company.

Thanks so much for going the extra mile to help that customer out. They appreciated it and so do I.

I love to go the extra mile to help people out.

Got started off on the wrong foot

Meaning: Get started badly.

Examples:

I'm worried that my boss and I got started off on the wrong foot . I thought I was supposed to start at 10 but she expected me to be there at 9.

I know that we got started off on the wrong foot but I'm hoping that things will be better in the future for us.

That project got started off on the wrong foot because the main engineer was sick for a few days right at the beginning.

Got wind of

Meaning: Heard about a certain thing.

Examples:

Did you get wind of that rumour that Connor McDavid is going to get traded? I can't believe the Oilers would do that but you never know I guess.

Our competitor got wind of our new feature and copied us.

My Mom got wind of my plan to sneak out and I got in big trouble!

Go with the flow

Meaning: To relax and go along with whatever happens.

Examples:

I find it very difficult to go with the flow . I prefer to be in charge!

Let's just go with the flow and see what happens? I think it's all going to work out well in the end.

If you want to work for her, you have to just go with the flow . Things seem to change every 5 minutes.

Hit the ground running

Meaning: Start something and make progress quickly on it.

Examples:

I can't hang out this weekend. I need to brush up on my JavaScript. I want to hit the ground running at this new programming job I just got.

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

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

Hit the nail on the head

Meaning: See the problem clearly and precisely.

Examples:

What's the real problem here? We need to hit the nail on the head as to what it is before we start offering up solutions.

You've hit the nail on the head . That's exactly what we need to do.

I don't quite think you've hit the nail on the head . Let's look at it this other way.

In it for the long haul

Meaning: Committed to something or someone for the long term.

Examples:

Let's rent some office space and hire some employees. If we want to be in it for the long haul, we need to hire people

Melissa and I are in it for the long haul. Neither of us plans on ever getting divorced.

We're in it for the long haul, for better or worse.

In the driver's seat

Meaning: In control of something; able to make decisions.

Examples:

You're in the driver's seat here. I think you can negotiate for a higher salary or more vacation if you want.

I think we're in the driver's seat with these negotiations.

I like to be in the driver's seat at work—I hate uncertainty!

It's a long shot

Meaning: Something that's not likely to happen.

Examples:

It's a long shot but I'd like to see if we could do it.

I know it's a long shot but I'm hoping that you'll have this car part in stock.

I applied but I think it's a long shot to even get an interview there. It's so competitive.

I've got my work cut out for me

Meaning: A big or difficult job to do.

Examples:

Good luck with that! You have your work cut out for you with that job. The boss is a nightmare.

I've got my work cut out for me cleaning the garage. It's a mess in there.

I think you've got your work cut out for you with that project.

Keep me on my toes

Meaning: Always ready to deal with anything that might happen. A situation or person that is challenging and requires someone to be at their best to handle it.

Examples:

I'm not sure what you were expecting but that job isn't easy! The suppliers can keep you on your toes . They'll try to give you bad product if you're not watching carefully.

My kids keep me on my toes .

This job is keeping me on my toes . Things are always changing.

Keep this under wraps

Meaning: Not tell anyone; conceal something.

Examples:

I'm going to tell you something but you need to keep it under wraps until after the public announcement. Can you do that?

Please keep this under wraps . It's not public yet.

I'm hoping we can keep this under wraps so that our clients don't find out.

Knock yourself out

Meaning: To encourage someone to take action to do something. Often something that others think is a waste of time.

Examples:

Are you sure? Knock yourself out then but I think you should wait until Tommy comes over and he can help you out.

Do you want to take that on? Knock yourself out .

Knock yourself out with that! I hate putting up Christmas lights.

Learn the ropes

Meaning: Get trained to do something.

Examples:

The job isn't difficult but it does take some time to learn the ropes . There are a lot of very specific procedures that must be followed precisely.

I still need to learn the ropes for my job. It's not easy and it seems like it's taking so long.

Please help him with learning the ropes , okay?

Let off the hook

Meaning: To not be punished, even though he/she was caught doing something wrong. For example, a politician who doesn't go to jail even though he committed a crime.

Examples:

I can't believe they let him off the hook for that crime.

My brother always got let off the hook by my parents. He was always their favourite.

They're not going to let you off the hook if you get caught this time. You already have two strikes. Be careful, okay?

Make a break for it

Meaning: Leave somewhere quickly.

Examples:

Go. Hurry up. We need to make a break for it before dad sees us taking the car.

Let's make a break for it before he sees us and makes us stay.

I'm hoping that Tony goes for lunch soon and then I can make a break for it and get out of here.

Missed the boat

Meaning: To perform poorly or badly.

Examples:

He kind of missed the boat during that presentation. Why did he spend so much time focusing on unimportant things?

I'm hoping that we won't miss the boat on this. There's a lot of opportunity here.

I liked his ideas but don't you think he missed the boat? The real issue is the fact that we lost so many customers because of our poor customer service.

Idiom Review #3

missed the boat, make a break for it, let her off the hook, learn the ropes, keep this under wraps, keeps me on my toes, hit the nail on the head, go with the flow, get wind of, go the extra mile, by the book

Did you _____ when the new iPhone will be released? You're always in the know.

My son _____ now that's walking. I'm so worried he's going to hurt himself.

I think you _____ with your closing argument.

Don't worry about it. It takes people at least a few months to _____.

You _____. That's exactly the issue here.

We're going to _____ until next week so please don't tell anyone about it yet.

You shouldn't _____ so much! She's taking advantage of you.

Answers

get wind of

keeps me on my toes

missed the boat

learn the ropes

hit the nail on the head

keep this under wraps

let her off the hook

Money to burn

Meaning: Extra money to spend freely.

Examples:

We don't have money to burn and can barely pay our bills. I can't believe you bought that without talking to me about it first!

Sure, let's go out tonight! I've got a bit of money to burn .

I know you have some money to burn and want to spend it, but why not pay off some bills first before buying all that stuff?

My hands are tied

Meaning: Unable to do something, even if you wanted to.

Examples:

Stop asking me about this. I can't help you. My hands are tied and I have to follow company policy.

Sorry, my hands are tied . I can't reverse that decision Johnny made.

I'd love to help you but my hands are tied .

My lips are sealed

Meaning: A promise to not tell anyone a certain thing.

Examples :

Please don't say anything about this until we make a public announcement, okay? Okay! My lips are sealed.

Don't worry! I won't say a thing. My lips are sealed.

My lips are sealed. I'll never tell anyone about that!

Not going to fly

Meaning: Not going to work.

Examples:

It doesn't matter how pretty of a PowerPoint presentation you make. Tammy is completely against this idea and it's not going to fly , no matter what you do.

This isn't going to fly . There are too many variables that we can't control here.

I told him that his idea wasn't going to fly but he didn't listen to me.

Not set in stone

Meaning: Not decided 100% yet.

Examples:

You can still provide input about this. The plan isn't set in stone.

I think we're going to Whistler for Christmas but it's not set in stone .

Nothing is set in stone . We're still open to feedback about this.

Off the top of my head

Meaning : Without research or deep thought about something.

Examples:

It's difficult for me to answer that question off the top of my head . Let me look into this a bit more and I'll get back to you with a definitive answer tomorrow.

I need to do more research about this but just off the top of my head , I think we should go with Apple instead of Dell for our networking system.

Hmmm... off the top of my head , perhaps we could check into these two options?

Once in a blue moon

Meaning: Something that doesn't happen often.

Examples:

Enjoy it! This company only has parties once in a blue moon and I honestly can't believe it's happening this year.

We're getting a bonus this year? Really? That only happens once in a blue moon !

He only cleans his room once in a blue moon .

Out of my depth

Meaning: Not qualified for, lacks knowledge of.

Examples:

I'm out of my depth when it comes to the programming aspect of this project. Do you think we could hire someone to do the heavy lifting here?

I'm a bit out of my depth on this. Can you please explain it again?

He was out of his depth on that project. We never should have put him in charge.

Pick up the slack

Meaning: Working harder out of necessity because someone else isn't working hard enough.

Examples:

I'm so tired of picking up the slack for you. Just because you have kids doesn't mean that you can leave early every day and not make up the time.

Melissa had to pick up the slack for Logan on that project.

I've been picking up the slack around the house because my wife has been traveling a lot for work.

Pull the plug

Meaning: Stop or cancel something before it's finished.

Examples:

It's time to pull the plug on this concert. We just haven't sold enough tickets yet and we can still get our deposit back if we do it now.

Let's pull the plug on this, okay? We're not getting anywhere.

I'm going to pull the plug if we don't get some good results in the next week or two. We have to stop wasting money on this.

Put your money where your mouth is

Meaning: Actions need to reflect words.

Examples:

Be one of those people that puts your money where your mouth is and you'll do well. Never say that you can do something unless you can back it up with action too.

She never puts her money where her mouth is ! I'd love to see some actual results.

I know I have to pull through in a big way here. It's time to put my money where my mouth is .

Read between the lines

Meaning: Discovering something secret or hidden.

Examples:

Why didn't you read between the lines ? It was pretty obvious you were going to get fired after they took away your company phone and office.

I know you're reading between the lines but nothing is going on.

I think we should read between the lines here. It looks like that company is getting ready to take us over.

Rock the boat

Meaning : Cause trouble or make waves.

Examples:

I don't want to rock the boat but I don't think Steven is the best choice of leader for this project.

I think you can point that out to your boss without rocking the boat.

You're going to have to rock the boat if you ask for two weeks of vacation in a row. I don't think they're ever approved that before.

Rule of thumb

Meaning: General rule about something.

Examples:

My rule of thumb is to be kind. That's a good policy for any situation or person that you might encounter in your life.

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

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

Stabbed someone in the back

Meaning : To betray someone, especially someone with a close relationship.

Examples:

I can never forgive Tom for stabbing me in the back on that project we did together. When things went wrong, he was so quick to throw me under the bus.

Tim stabbed Tony in the back . I'm not sure how this is going to go down.

She stabbed me in the back years ago and has been dead to me ever since.

Strapped for cash

Meaning: Lacking money.

Examples:

Aren't you strapped for cash ? Why did you buy a new car?

I know you're strapped for cash but this is a great deal. I think you should do it.

Why don't you come over for dinner instead of going out? I'm a bit strapped for cash lately.

Take the bull by the horns

Meaning : Do something bravely and decisively.

Examples:

If you're not going to take the bull by the horns and do it, I will. Somebody has to be in charge of this project or it's not going to get done.

I think you should take the bull by the horns and make a decision about it.

Carol is great at taking the bull by the horns and getting things done! She's the best boss.

The ball's in your court

Meaning: You have the power to decide on something.

Examples:

I know you're nervous about asking for a raise but the ball's in your court. They need you way more than you need them.

I know you feel like you don't have any power in this situation but the ball's in your court .

The ball's in your court . You can decide what you want to do here.

Idiom Review #4

money to burn, my hands are tied, my lips are sealed, not set in stone, once in a blue moon, out of my depth, pick up the slack, pull the plug, read between the lines, rule of thumb, strapped for cash

Are you sure? I didn't know you had _____.

A good _____ is to make one extra for each order, just in case.

Don't feel bad about it! We only get to leave early _____.

You'll have to _____ when Keith is on vacation.

It's _____ but I think we're going to leave on July 2 nd .

Don't worry. _____.

I'm not sure I can help you with this. I'm a bit _____.

Answers

money to burn

rule of thumb

once in a blue moon

pick up the slack

not set in stone

My lips are sealed

out of my depth

The bottom line

Meaning : The outcome or thing to base a decision on.

Examples:

I know you don't want to but the bottom line is that you just need to get it done by Friday or you'll get fired.

The bottom line is that I'm not willing to do that. You'll have to find someone else who will.

When it comes down to it, the bottom line is that he wasn't able to get the job done. That's why we fired him.

The elephant in the room

Meaning: Something obvious and important that nobody wants to talk about.

Examples:

We just talk, talk, talk but not about the real issue. The elephant in the room is that our product is inferior and that's why we're losing market share.

I'm so frustrated at work! Jeremy never wants to talk about the elephant in the room, which is Tim's poor performance.

Why am I the only one who seems to see the elephant in the room? What's wrong with my co-workers?

Thinking outside the box

Meaning: Creative thinking about something.

Examples:

I hate how Erin keeps saying to think outside the box like it's such an easy thing to do! I feel so much pressure about coming up with creative ideas on demand.

I want to hear all the ideas and suggestions for dealing with this problem. Let's try thinking outside the box.

He's great at thinking outside the box and coming up with creative solutions for difficult situations.

Throw in the towel

Meaning: To quit or give up.

Examples:

Isn't it time to throw in the towel? We've been working so hard on this for months and haven't made even a little bit of progress on it.

Let's not throw in the towel yet. We can still make some progress here.

I know you want to throw in the towel but you committed to the team and can't quit halfway through the season.

Tip of the iceberg

Meaning : A very small part of something much bigger, usually a negative thing or a problem.

Examples:

That leak is just the tip of the iceberg . There's probably water damage all over our house. I'm scared to even know.

That was just the tip of the iceberg . There are way more problems than that one.

I know that Jerry thinks he can solve this one problem and that all will be good but that's just the tip of the iceberg .

Treading water

Meaning: Barely keeping up with work or school.

Examples:

We need to hire a new person. I'm tired of just treading water and trying to keep up with everything. We have no hope of ever getting ahead.

I'm barely treading water with my job. There's just so much work to do.

He was only treading water for years before he finally got fired. Surprisingly, it didn't happen sooner.

Under the table

Meaning: Something sketchy or illegal.

Examples:

If you want to pay in cash under the table , I can give you a 5% discount.

You know I hate to do things under the table . Let's get the legal team in on this.

The best deals in my industry usually happen under the table .

Up in the air

Meaning : Not decided yet.

Examples:

What date works best for you? It's still up in the air for Tom and me.

It's still up in the air about what we're going to do for Christmas.

I'm not sure where everyone decided to go for lunch. It's still up in the air .

Water under the bridge

Meaning: Something from the past that is better forgotten.

Examples:

Forget about it. It's water under the bridge and I didn't even care that much about it when it happened.

Oh, that thing? It's water under the bridge . Don't even worry about it.

That mistake of yours is water under the bridge . Let's just move forward and try to do better in the future.

Weather the storm

Meaning: Make it through, or survive a difficult situation.

Examples:

Covid-19 showed which companies could weather the storm and which ones couldn't. The ones that could are stronger than ever I think.

I hope we can weather the storm and make it through this pandemic without going out of business.

Let's weather the storm the best we can. It's just a couple more months until Kathy comes back from maternity leave.

Within our reach

Meaning: Can be obtained without too much difficulty.

Examples:

Don't undervalue yourself! You have a top-class education and lots of experience. I think that job is within your reach .

I think that this contract is within our reach . We have to think carefully about our bid price though.

An A+ on this group project is within our reach . Let's work hard on it and see if we can do it. We have a great team.

Work my way up

Meaning: To start at the bottom and work hard to move higher up in a company.

Examples:

I just saw a movie about this guy who started as a janitor and worked his way up to management at a big bank. It was super impressive!

I want to work my way up in this company. I'm not going to stop until I'm the CFO.

He's been working his way up for years and now holds a very high position.

Idiom Review #5

the ball's in your court, the bottom line, the elephant in the room, thinking outside the box, throw in the towel, tip of the iceberg, treading water, under the table, water under the bridge, weather the storm

I'm not sure if we'll be able to _____. Covid-19 hit our company hard.

All those scandals are just the _____.

_____ is that you'll need to do more work and less playing on your phone.

I'm terrible at _____. I need a job that doesn't require creative thinking!

Call me next week if you want to talk more about this. _____.

I don't think I can hang out this weekend. I'm _____ at work right now and need to catch up.

Sorry, we can't take any payments _____.

Answers

weather the storm

tip of the iceberg

The bottom line

thinking outside the box

The ball's in your court

treading water

under the table

Collocations

Affordable housing

Meaning: Housing that is designed to be cheaper than normal, usually subsidized by the government.

Examples:

Affordable housing is a real issue in Vancouver. The working poor are having to live further and further away from the city centre and commute long distances to work.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Canadian government is affordable housing . There isn't enough supply to meet the demand.

Kids are staying with their parents into their late 20's these days because of the lack of affordable housing .

At the end of the day

Meaning: The final opinion about someone or something; the outcome of something.

Examples:

At the end of the day , it comes down to whether or not you want more money or more vacation. That's the major difference between those two jobs.

At the end of the day, he's not going to change. You have to decide whether or not it's enough for you.

At the end of the day , you have to let her decide what she wants to do. She's 20 years old and you can't make all the decisions for her.

Between jobs

Meaning: Describes someone who lost a job but is looking for another one.

Examples:

Doesn't Tommy always seem like he's between jobs ? I wonder what's up with him.

I'm between jobs right now but have a few interviews lined up for next week.

I'm between jobs now but that's quite normal in the film industry. You work hard for a few months and then take a few months off.

Big picture

Meaning: Considering everything.

Examples:

Hold on a second. We're getting lost in the weeds here. Let's take a step back and look at the big picture.

I'm great at big picture things but looking at all the numbers in detail is my worst nightmare.

Keith is a big picture kind of guy. He's great at leading teams but isn't the best for keeping people on track.

Brutally honest

Meaning: Holding nothing back from each other; no secrets.

Examples:

To be brutally honest here, you're not living up to our expectations. You'll have to work a lot more quickly if you want to keep your job.

My boss was brutally honest with me and told me that I had terrible body odour last week. I'm honestly happy he told me. I didn't realize that.

When giving feedback, whether or not I'm brutally honest depends on the person. Some people can handle it but other people can't and you have to sugar coat it for them.

Can't afford to

Meaning: Don't have enough money to do something.

Examples :

I'm so sad that I can't afford to go on vacation this year.

Do you really think we can't afford to buy a new car? This one is so old.

No! We can't afford to keep eating out all the time.

Catch my breath

Meaning: Stop and take a break after a busy period.

Examples:

Give me a second. I need to catch my breath before we start the next problem.

Why don't we take the rest of the day off and catch our breaths ? It's been so busy this week already.

I like to stop and catch my breath after commuting to work. I grab a cup of coffee and read the newspaper for a few minutes before I turn on my computer.

Caught a cold

Meaning: Got sick (sore throat, runny nose, etc.)

Examples :

Last Christmas, I caught a cold and was sick for weeks after.

You're going to catch a cold if you don't dress warmly enough.

My whole family caught colds last month. It was terrible.

Common knowledge

Meaning: Everyone knows about it.

Examples:

I'm not sure why you're just figuring this out now. It's common knowledge that Tony gets barely any work done.

Isn't it common knowledge that you can turn right on a red light as long as there are no oncoming cars? Why don't people do it?

It's common knowledge that you should cut back on animal products if you want to prevent cancer.

Core values

Meaning: A person or an organization's most important beliefs.

Examples:

For difficult problems, we always need to go back to our core values and make sure that whatever decision we make aligns with them.

My company is just in the process of refining its core values . We've expanded so much in the past couple of years that they don't fit that well.

I don't think a company can run well without defining its core values.

Do the right thing

Meaning: Make good choices.

Examples:

Sandy is a solid person who can be counted on to do the right thing .

When you're a teacher, you often have to face ethical dilemmas. But, if you try to do the right thing , you usually won't go wrong.

Did I do the right thing ? What do you think? I'm not sure.

Down the road

Meaning: In the future.

Examples:

Down the road , I'd like to buy a house but it's difficult in Vancouver. Everything is so expensive.

I'd like to change jobs down the road. It's just that the economy is so bad right now because of Covid-19 that I'm thankful for the one I have and don't want to give it up.

Down the road , I'm not sure what my relationship with Kristy will look like. Hopefully, a bit more serious than it is now.

First things first

Meaning: Tackle the first thing before jumping ahead to other things.

Examples :

First things first , we need to find out what the issue is.

Don't get ahead of yourself here. First things first .

You always put the cart before the horse. First things first !

Food poisoning

Meaning: Getting sick from something that you ate.

Examples:

I got food poisoning from not cooking my chicken enough. There was tomato sauce on it so it was difficult to tell.

My worst vacation was when I got food poisoning in Thailand.

Food poisoning can be deadly if you don't get treatment and stay hydrated.

Get a degree

Meaning: Finish college and get the paper certificate proving that you did.

Examples:

You don't need to get a degree these days to get a good job. You can open your own business or go into a trade.

After I get my degree, I want to find a job at a big bank.

While getting my degree, I worked part-time as a server on the weekends to pay my tuition.

Get back on track

Meaning: Start doing well again, after a bad time.

Examples:

Let's get back on track here. We've already wasted too much time chit-chatting.

How can we help Timmy get back on track? He failed two classes last semester.

Can you help me get back on track? I can't lose this job. My family depends on it.

Get together

Meaning: Meet up with someone (verb). Get-together: A small party (noun)

Examples:

Do you want to get together this weekend? Maybe we can go for a walk.

Did you hear about Tom's get-together this weekend? Are you planning on going? It sounds fun.

Why don't we get together after the kids are back in school? I'll have a lot more time then.

Global warming

Meaning: The average temperature of the Earth increasing with each year.

Examples:

Global warming is a huge threat to our world and we are seeing record-breaking temperatures in most cities each year.

There needs to be massive action from governments to help slow global warming .

One of the biggest reasons for global warming is meat production.

Good friends

Meaning: A close relationship with a friend.

Examples:

I like to get together with my good friends at least once a week.

We've been good friends since elementary school. So many years now!

I try to stay in touch with good friends through video calls.

Good with computers

Meaning: Describes someone who knows how to use computers well.

Examples :

Why don't you ask Tim for help? He's good with computers.

You have to be good with computers to work for that company.

I've never been good with computers . I avoid using them if at all possible.

Good with money

Meaning: Someone who knows how to handle money well.

Examples:

Why don't you talk to Sarah? She's good with money and can help you out I think.

He's good with money and managed to save enough at his minimum wage job to put a deposit down on a house. It's very impressive!

People who are good with money would rather lend money than borrow money.

Got into trouble

Meaning: Had some problems happen.

Examples:

I got into trouble when I bought a new house and then lost my job.

Tommy got into trouble at school today. He hit another kid at recess.

I don't want to get in trouble but I do need to say something about Carrie. She is bullying a few different people at work here.

Great lengths

Meaning: Above and beyond what is necessary.

Examples:

You have to go to great lengths to get a job at Google. I don't even know if it's worth it though. They expect you to work such long hours.

I went to great lengths to help out Sid and he just said thanks and that was it.

Can you believe that customer service rep? She went to such great lengths to help me get a replacement phone. I'm going to email her supervisor and say how fantastic she is.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Meaning: What is released (mainly carbon dioxide) when fossil fuels are burned.

Examples:

One of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions is beef production.

Greenhouse gas emissions are the main cause of global warming.

We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions drastically if we hope to slow global warming.

Have a drink

Meaning: Drink alcohol.

Examples :

Let's have a drink after work.

I like to have a few drinks on Friday nights with my friends.

Do you want to have a drink with me next Tuesday?

High hopes

Meaning: High expectations.

Examples:

I had high hopes for Tommy because he had such great recommendations. But, I don't think he's a good fit.

I'm sorry it didn't work out. I know you had high hopes for this program to help you find a good job.

You had such high hopes for this girl! What happened?

Housing prices

Meaning: The average price of houses in an area.

Examples:

Housing prices are going through the roof in Vancouver these days. It's almost impossible to save enough for a down payment.

In general, housing prices increase from year to year, making them quite a good investment.

I'm waiting for housing prices to increase before I put mine on the market.

In the dark

Meaning: Not knowing about something.

Examples :

Let's keep Ted in the dark . I don't want him to ruin this surprise. You know he can't keep a secret.

I'm kind of in the dark about what Sandy is up to these days. Do you know?

I can't answer any questions about the product launch. I'm in the dark myself.

Collocations Review #1

affordable housing , housing prices, at the end of the day, high hopes,
between jobs, get me into trouble, big picture, brutally honest, good friends,
global warming, get back on track, down the road

I don't think it'll be that difficult to _____. Let's try anyway.

_____, we just didn't agree on having kids so we had to break up.

_____ are at record highs in Toronto.

You're going to _____ one day if I keep going out drinking with you.

Can I be _____ with you? Your work isn't high enough quality to send to clients.

_____, we need to move. Your commute is killing you.

Ted is _____ now but I think he'll find something soon.

Answers

get back on track

at the end of the day

Housing prices

get me into trouble

brutally honest

Big picture

between jobs

Keep in touch

Meaning: Stay connected via phone or email.

Examples:

I'm not sure if I'll be able to do this, or not. But, let's keep in touch and I should know more in a few days.

Hey, keep in touch , okay? I enjoyed talking to you.

How can we keep in touch ? Do you use WhatsApp?

Key issue

Meaning: The most important thing.

Examples:

The key issue is that we need to fire Sammy. Nothing is going to change around here until we do that.

What's the key issue ? I'm having a hard time figuring that out. There are so many problems.

I think the key issue is that our suppliers keep delivering sub-par products. We are wasting so much time trying to fix this. Maybe we need to make a change.

Last minute

Meaning: Doing something at the last possible moment.

Examples:

You know that I hate doing stuff at the last minute . Why did you only tell me about this now?

I have a few last minute things I need to do. I'll come over when I'm done. It should be another hour.

Can you come over on Friday evening to help me with the last minute wedding things? I don't want to be scrambling on Saturday morning.

Let me know

Meaning: Tell the outcome of something.

Examples:

Please let me know if you can come or not. I need to make a reservation.

Just let Min-Gyu know later. It's not urgent.

We'll let you know about the interview results within a week. Check your email.

Make a mess

Meaning: Make something untidy or disorganized.

Examples:

It's okay if you make a mess in the kitchen as long as you clean it up afterwards.

Ahhh. . .I made a mess of this spreadsheet. I don't know what I'm doing.

How did you make such a mess ? Please clean up your room before you go out with your friends.

Make some suggestions

Meaning: Offer some advice.

Examples:

Is it okay to make some suggestions ? I think there are some areas where we could make some big improvements to the procedures.

Please make some suggestions ! I need help improving my financial situation.

I hate how Cam always makes suggestions about what we should do but then never does anything to help implement them.

Minor injury

Meaning: Not a serious injury.

Examples:

Oh, it's just a minor injury. It looks way worse because of the bruising.

Thankfully, it's just a minor injury. Some bruising but nothing is broken.

My son Tim is so injury-prone. He has some kind of minor injury almost every single day. Thankfully, nothing too serious yet.

Mutual friend

Meaning: When two people share the same friend but aren't friends themselves.

Examples:

I think we have a mutual friend . You know Casey, right?

I can't believe we've never met. I just looked on Facebook and we have 15 mutual friends !

Ted and I have this mutual friend , Chris, who is the most generous guy. He always offers for everyone to come to his cabin.

My mistake

Meaning: Something I did that's wrong.

Examples:

Oh, that was my mistake . Sorry about that.

I don't think you did anything wrong here. It was my mistake . Why did Bob think it was you?

Oh, no. Was that my mistake that caused that to happen?

Needle in a haystack

Meaning: Describes something difficult to find.

Examples:

It's like a needle in a haystack . We're never going to find that line of code that caused the issue.

I know it's a needle in the haystack , but you'll have to go through everything with a fine-tooth comb to find it.

I can't believe we found that matching piece. It was a needle in a haystack for sure.

Not feeling great

Meaning: Feeling under the weather.

Examples:

Can we postpone this until next week? I'm not feeling great .

I'm not sure what's wrong but I haven't been feeling great for a few months now.

If you're not feeling great , take the day off. You have all those unused sick days.

Online shopping

Meaning: Buying things using the Internet.

Examples :

The popularity of online shopping exploded during Covid-19.

I never go to the store these days! I'm ALL about online shopping .

I prefer shopping in stores to online shopping for clothes and shoes.

On the same page

Meaning: Agree about something.

Examples:

I don't think we're on the same page here. We can't even agree on what the problem is.

I want to be on the same page about what chores Tom should be doing around the house. We need to be united about this.

I want to spend some time getting on the same page about our goals for the upcoming year.

Out of the loop

Meaning: Not knowing some important information.

Examples:

I'm out of the loop . Can you please bring me up to speed on what you've been working on the last two weeks?

How did I not hear about that? I can't believe I'm so out of the loop !

Can we please keep Keith out of the loop on this? You know how he likes to take projects like this over and ruin them.

Parking ticket

Meaning: A fine you have to pay for parking illegally.

Examples:

I don't think you can park here. You'll for sure get a parking ticket .

Isn't that your car over there? A guy is giving you a parking ticket right now.

If you don't pay parking tickets on time, you get charged more later.

Plenty of fish in the sea

Meaning: There are many eligible people to date.

Examples:

Hey buddy, don't worry about it. There are plenty of fish in the sea.

I know that everyone always says that there are plenty of fish in the sea but it doesn't feel like that right now! I keep meeting these terrible people online.

You'll find a new boyfriend in no time at all. There are plenty of fish in the sea .

Quick snack

Meaning: Something small and easy to eat between meals.

Examples:

I need to grab a quick snack before we go. I skipped lunch today.

Let's stop at that gas station for a quick snack . I'm going to be so hungry by the time we get home.

I'll pack up some things for a quick snack while we're driving. Hopefully, we can avoid stopping for a long time at a restaurant. I just want to get there quickly.

Quit his job

Meaning: Gave notice that he would stop working at his job.

Examples :

I can't believe Tom quit his job . Do you know why?

I'm thinking about quitting my job but I'm worried that I might not find another one.

I wish we could quit our jobs and travel the world!

Rising sea levels

Meaning: How the level of the ocean is increasing year after year.

Examples:

Some small islands will be completely underwater in a few years because of rising sea levels .

One of the consequences of global warming is rising sea levels.

Rising sea levels happen because of the polar ice caps melting.

Collocations Review #2

keep in touch, last minute, parking ticket, make a mess, make some suggestions, rising sea levels, mutual friend, needle in a haystack, on the same page

I want to make sure that we're _____ about the plans for this weekend.

If you _____, that's okay but you'll need to clean it up.

Burning fossil fuels is the main cause of _____.

Can I _____? I think we should cut out this part and add something about the history.

I know it's kind of _____, but do you want to go out for dinner tonight?

I recognize you. Isn't Keith our _____? Were you at his Christmas party?

Why don't we _____ and make a plan to get together in a month or two?

Answers

on the same page

make a mess

rising sea levels

make some suggestions

last minute

mutual friend

keep in touch

Rubs me the wrong way

Meaning: Something that annoys or irritates.

Examples:

Tom just rubs me the wrong way . I'm not sure why but I just don't like talking to that guy.

You know what rubs me the wrong way ? It's politicians who talk a good game but then have all these sketchy things they do behind closed doors.

My new neighbor rubs me the wrong way . He's always smoking in his front yard and the smoke goes into my open windows.

Seen better days

Meaning: In poor/bad condition.

Examples:

Don't buy that car. It's seen better days and you're going to have so many problems with it.

That condo complex has seen better days. It doesn't look like it's been maintained well.

Tom has seen better days. He's not fit to lead our company.

Stay safe

Meaning: Take caution to not get into trouble or danger.

Examples:

The important thing is to stay safe. Never put yourself in danger trying to help someone else.

Stay safe , okay? The roads are icy tonight.

If you want to stay safe when travelling, a good general rule is to not go out alone at night.

Take action

Meaning: Do something.

Examples:

It's time to take action on climate change. The time for talking about the issue is over.

She's a take action kind of woman.

Why don't you take some action ? Just ask her out on a date.

Take a look

Meaning: Examine.

Examples:

I can take a look at your report before you hand it in if you want.

Let me take a look at your car. I don't know that much about cars but maybe it's just a simple problem that I can fix.

Let me take a look at that cavity of yours. Please open your mouth.

Take notes

Meaning: Attend a lecture (or meeting) and write down the main points.

Examples:

Can you please take notes at the meeting today? I'd appreciate it.

Take note of how he does things. He's so efficient and I think we can learn a lot from him.

Did you take notes during class today? Can you please let me take a look at them? I had to miss class.

Take things slowly

Meaning: To not move quickly.

Examples:

Can we please take things slowly ? I haven't dated anyone in a long time.

Let's take things slowly with this new product. We need to prove that there's a market for it before producing way too many units.

When you start training for a marathon, take things slowly at first. It's easy to get injured.

These days

Meaning: Recently; now.

Examples :

What are you up to these days ?

These days , I've been taking it easy and working less overtime.

You're not looking well these days. Is something wrong?

The wrong impression

Meaning: To think wrongly about someone, based on a first meeting.

Examples:

You might have the wrong impression of me. I'm usually very efficient but I've been sick for the last few weeks.

I think you have the wrong impression of Jenny. People usually like working with her. What happened between you two?

Maybe I have the wrong impression , but it just didn't seem like she was that interested in going on another date.

Unemployment rate

Meaning: The number of people without jobs measured against the total workforce (listed as a percentage).

Examples:

The unemployment rate in Canada skyrocketed at the beginning of the pandemic.

What's the unemployment rate among youth in Alberta these days?

One of the major indicators of the overall economy is the unemployment rate.

Up and running

Meaning: Get started and then continuing.

Examples :

Is your business up and running yet? Do you have a website?

Let's get this pool up and running . Spring has sprung and it'll be warm enough to swim soon!

I have a difficult time getting up and running on weekend mornings. I just want to sleep in.

Washing the dishes

Meaning: Cleaning plates, pots, etc.

Examples :

Please wash your dishes and don't leave them out on the counter.

I hated washing dishes when I worked in a restaurant.

I know it's weird, but I find washing the dishes quite a relaxing chore.

Weather forecast

Meaning: Weather prediction for the next hours or days.

Examples:

What's the weather forecast showing for next weekend? We might have to postpone our BBQ.

Let's take a look at the weather forecast . It might be too hot to go hiking on Sunday.

The weather forecast calls for rain all week.

Worried sick

Meaning: Anxious or stressed out to the extreme.

Examples:

I'm worried sick about my dad. He's in the ICU with Covid.

Jen is worried sick about the SAT. She wants to get into Harvard.

I'm worried sick about money since I lost my job. I may have to sell my house and rent.

Collocations Review #3

puts me the wrong way , weather forecast, worried sick, seen better days, stay safe, the wrong impression, take notes, stay safe, take action

Please _____. The roads are icy.

Can you please _____ during the meeting?

Do you think I have _____ of Ted? I like him but other people say he's creepy.

What's the _____ say? Good for hiking on Saturday?

I'm _____ about my Dad since he had a heart attack.

Wow! You look like you've _____. What's up? Do you need help?

I just don't like that new guy. He _____.

We need to _____ on climate change.

Answers

stay safe

take notes

the wrong impression

weather forecast

worried sick

seen better days

rubs me the wrong way

take action

American English Slang

A flick

Meaning: A movie.

Examples:

Why don't we catch a flick this weekend? I haven't been to the theater in a long time.

Have you seen any flicks lately?

I watched a few flicks this weekend. Nothing special. It was so rainy.

Bad guy

Meaning: Someone who always has bad news/enforces a rule.

Examples:

Please get the kids to put away their stuff after school too! I hate always being the bad guy.

I hate to be the bad guy here but everyone needs to show up for work on time.

He wasn't a bad guy but he was just boring. We had nothing to talk about on our second and third dates.

Bail

Meaning: Leave; depart.

Examples:

Let's bail. It's getting late and I have to work in the morning.

Keith always bails early. I don't know why we keep inviting him.

Let's go. We can bail if it turns out to be boring.

Blow off some steam

Meaning: Relax; let loose.

Examples:

I want to blow off some steam this weekend. I've been working way too hard this week!

Let's blow off some steam after work. I'll buy you a beer?

I do want to blow off some steam after work but I'm also so tired and need to have an early night I think.

Brings the hammer down

Meaning: Punishes.

Examples :

You need to bring the hammer down on those guys. They are taking longer and longer lunch breaks.

My teacher brought the hammer down on my class and failed most of us on our last essay.

It's time to bring the hammer down on the kids. They are getting lazier and lazier about doing their chores.

Bummed

Meaning: Feeling let down about something.

Examples :

I'm so bummed about Ted breaking up with me. I had no idea he was going to do that.

Are you bummed about your company going bankrupt? I know you hated that job anyway.

I'm bummed that the concert got cancelled.

Catch some rays

Meaning: Go outside in the sun.

Examples:

I want to catch some rays this weekend at the park. Hopefully, the sun comes out!

Wow! You caught some rays on your vacation. Didn't you use sunscreen?

I don't understand why everyone likes to catch some rays at the beach. Aren't they worried about skin cancer?

Chill out

Meaning: Relax.

Examples:

Hey, chill out ! I know you don't like Nancy but there will lots of other people there. You don't even need to talk to her.

Let's just chill out at home tonight. I'm so tired from going out all the time.

I don't know what to do about Bob. He just likes to chill out every day after school playing video games and eating junk food. His grades are terrible.

Cool

Meaning: Hip; awesome; great.

Examples:

That's cool about your new job!

He's so worried about being cool these days with his new clothes and fancy car.

You look so cool with those sunglasses!

Cops

Meaning: Police officers.

Examples :

Should we call the cops ? They're being so loud and it's 2 am.

What are all the cops doing here? I wonder what's going on.

Tony wants to be a cop when he's done university but I'm a bit worried because I think it's quite a dangerous job.

Couch potatoes

Meaning: People who aren't that active, instead preferring to sit on the couch and watch TV or play video games.

Examples:

Tommy is such a couch potato ! He just plays video games and eats junk food all weekend. I've given up on him ever doing anything with me.

I want to be a couch potato this weekend. My job is so busy now with Covid-19.

I was a real couch potato in my 20's but I turned it around when I turned 30 and started training for a marathon.

Crashed

Meaning: Suddenly had no energy.

Examples:

I crashed hard this weekend. I'd been staying up so late studying for finals.

I just want to crash after work today. Watch some Netflix and eat popcorn.

Sammy crashed last night at 7:00. She swam so hard at her competition.

Drives me up the wall

Meaning: Makes me crazy; annoys.

Examples:

You know what drives me up the wall ? People who are slow-walkers.

Tony drives me up the wall . He's so gross—he clips his toenails at his desk!

Sidney drives me up the wall with her phone. She gets so many notifications and never puts her phone on silent.

Dumped

Meaning: Broken up with.

Examples:

Did you hear that Ted dumped Chris?

I'm usually the one that dumps people instead of them dumping me.

Julie dumped me last week. I'm so sad about it.

Feeling under the weather

Meaning: Not feeling well; feeling sick.

Examples:

I've been feeling under the weather lately but I'm not sure why.

Tom is feeling a bit under the weather today. I think I'm going to keep him home from school.

Lots of people are under the weather at work. It happens every winter though during flu season.

Getting by

Meaning: Describes someone who can pay the bills but doesn't have a lot of extra money.

Examples:

Sam is just getting by. Rent is so expensive in Vancouver.

I'm tired of just getting by. I think I need to go back to school so I can get a better job.

Many people are barely getting by in New York. The minimum wage is quite low and housing is expensive.

Slang Review #1

a flick, bad guys, bail, blow off some steam, catch some rays, chill out, cops, couch potato, drives me up the wall, dump, getting by

My husband is such a _____. It's impossible to get him to even go for a walk with me.

You know what _____? TV commercials.

Sorry, I have to _____. My boss just told me that I need to work late.

Hey buddy, _____. The bar is going to call the _____ on us.

Do you want to go kayaking on Sunday and _____?

I think I might _____ Tom. We've been fighting so much lately.

Lindsey and Sam are just _____ I think. I don't think they can afford to come with us.

This movie is so boring. The police chase the _____. That's it!

Answers

couch potato

drives me up the wall

bail

chill out, cops

catch some rays

dump

getting by

bad guys

Ghosted

Meaning: Suddenly stopped responding to messages without explanation, usually in a dating relationship.

Examples :

I can't believe he ghosted me after we went out on 3 dates. I have no idea what happened.

I think it's okay to ghost someone if you haven't met them yet. No explanation is needed if you've only been chatting online.

Ghosting is so terrible! You should just be honest and say something if you don't want to continue seeing someone.

Grab

Meaning: Get; pick up.

Examples :

Wait a second. I have to grab my jacket before we go.

Let's grab some sushi and eat it at the park tonight? It's so beautiful outside.

Can we grab some snacks and drinks before we go? I haven't eaten dinner yet.

Hang out

Meaning: Spend time with someone.

Examples:

Do you want to hang out this weekend? I think I'm free all day Saturday.

I hung out with Tommy last night. I haven't seen him in a long time!

I think Jill and I are hanging out on Friday night if you want to join us?

Hangry

Meaning: Hungry + angry combined.

Examples:

Ethan gets so hangry after school so I always bring him a snack for the car on the way home.

I start to get hangry by lunchtime if I only eat a smoothie for breakfast.

I'm hangry ! Can we stop and grab a sushi roll or something?

Hit the books

Meaning: Studied.

Examples:

Sorry, no drinks for me tonight. I have to hit the books for my CPA exam. It's next Tuesday.

I'm done hitting the books ! I never want to take another exam ever.

I hit the books hard last night and ended up staying up until 3 am.

Hold out

Meaning: Wait.

Examples:

I think we can hold out for a better offer. We're not desperate to sell.

Don't hold out too long! Someone else is going to put an offer in for sure.

I held out for a better salary offer for my job and it all ended up working out.

Hooked

Meaning: Addicted.

Examples:

I'm so hooked on coffee. I can't make it through a day without drinking it.

Ted and I are hooked on soda but we're trying to gradually reduce how much we drink.

If you're hooked on smoking from a young age, it can be very difficult to quit.

Killed it

Meaning: Did well at something.

Examples:

You killed it this afternoon! You must have been practicing a lot since we last played.

I want to kill it on my exam. That's why I'm studying so much.

You're killing it ! Keep going.

Like riding a bike

Meaning: Describes something that you can easily do after many years of not doing it.

Examples:

You'll get the hang of it. Don't worry. It's just like riding a bike .

Playing tennis is like riding a bike . If you learned the proper strokes when you were young, it'll come back to you in no time at all.

Have fun and chill out about it! It's like riding a bike .

Maxed out

Meaning: At capacity.

Examples:

Sorry, I can't help you. I'm maxed out already.

I can't take any more clients. I'm maxed out with the ones I already have.

I m ax out at around 10 clients at a time.

Out of the loop

Meaning: Not knowing some information.

Examples:

I'm so out of the loop! I can't believe that I didn't know Tim and Carrie broke up.

I honestly like being out of the loop when it comes to work gossip. Nothing good comes of being in the middle of that stuff.

I hate being out of the loop so I'm constantly checking my phone.

Pain in the neck

Meaning: Describes someone annoying or bothersome.

Examples:

That side-job of mine is a real pain in the neck . I never find out my schedule until the very last minute.

Sarah is a pain in the neck. She just asks so many questions during meetings about things that we've already talked about. She's just on her phone all the time and doesn't listen.

My dog is a pain in the neck . He chews anything and everything, including couches, shoes, and jackets.

Peanuts

Meaning: A small amount of money.

Examples :

I'm tired of working for peanuts . I have to find a better-paying job.

I understand that you want to help people but those kinds of jobs pay peanuts . You'll have a hard time surviving in Toronto on that salary.

He charges peanuts . Why is he so much cheaper than the competition?

Pissed Off

Meaning: Angry.

Examples:

Wow. Bob is so pissed off at Kim for showing up late again.

I was pissed off at Ted this weekend. He said he'd help me clean the garage but he wouldn't stop playing video games.

I get pissed off when people drive under the speed limit.

Pitch in

Meaning: To contribute to or help with something.

Examples:

If we all pitch in , it'll take under an hour I think.

We can all pitch in and help you move. You don't need to hire a company. They're so expensive!

Can anyone pitch in a few dollars for this charity campaign? They need our help.

Roll

Meaning: Go somewhere.

Examples:

Let's roll. I'm tired and still need to drive home.

Are you ready to roll ?

It's time to roll ! We agreed to leave at 9:00, remember?

Running out of gas

Meaning: Getting tired.

Examples :

Can we take a break? I'm running out of gas.

I'm running out of gas on this project. Let's call it a day and start fresh tomorrow.

If you're running out of gas , why don't you just go to bed? You'll do better on a good night's sleep.

Slang Review #2

ghosted, hang out, pain in the neck, hangry, hold out, hooked, maxed out, peanuts, roll, pitch in, pissed off

I'd love to _____ again if you're up for it.

That job pays _____. I think you could do better.

If we all _____, we can clean this place up in under an hour.

Sorry, I'm _____ this week. I think I have some openings for next week though.

That dog next door is a _____.

Have you ever been _____?

I'm starting to get _____. Can we stop for some lunch?

I'm so _____ on coffee. I could never quit.

Answers

hang out

peanuts

pitch in

maxed out

pain in the neck

ghosted

hangry

hooked

Sketchy

Meaning: Describes someone who can't be trusted.

Examples:

Don't driving in that part of town. It's super sketchy .

I went out on a date with that guy I met online but he was sketchy . I pretended I was going to the bathroom and just left.

That supplier is sketchy . Do you think he's selling us stolen goods?

Straight up

Meaning: Honestly.

Examples:

I think it's always best to be straight up with people. Who doesn't want to know the truth, right?

Kerry is very straight up which makes him a great boss. You know exactly what you need to do to improve your performance. He never sugar coats anything.

To be straight up here, I don't think we can continue with this contract next year. Your performance hasn't been up to standard.

Sucked

Meaning: Describes something terrible.

Examples:

That movie sucked ! I feel like I've wasted 2 hours of my life that I can never get back.

I used to suck at swimming but I took some lessons and now don't have to stop after every single lap.

My first job at a fast food restaurant sucked . The pay was so low and I had to clean the disgusting grease traps.

Third wheel

Meaning: Describes someone who is spending time with a couple.

Examples:

I would love to see that movie but I don't want to be the third wheel .

I don't mind being the third wheel with Will and Sidney. They always make an effort to include me in conversations.

I went over for dinner but Ted cancelled at the last minute so I ended up being the third wheel. It was uncomfortable.

Vanilla

Meaning: Boring; not interesting.

Examples:

I went on a date with a guy last night but it was so boring. He's very vanilla.

That town is full of vanilla people. I moved away when I was 18.

I don't think vanilla is terrible for a boyfriend. People like that are often reliable and trustworthy.

Went down

Meaning: Happened.

Examples:

What went down with you and Jenny? You used to be the best of friends.

Some bad stuff went down at my company last month and I don't think I can continue working there. I'm going to quit as soon as I can find a new job.

Nothing bad went down . I just got kind of bored with him and knew it was time to break up. That's it!

Slang Review #3

sketchy, killed it , sucked, straight up, third wheel, vanilla, went down, run out of gas, pissed off, out of the loop

Seriously, you _____ on that presentation. Nicely done!

I'm not sure what _____ between those two but they hate each other.

I'm starting to _____. Can we take a quick coffee break?

I like to be _____ with people. I know, it's a bit unusual but it works for me.

I'm so _____ for the office gossip. Honestly though, I haven't missed it!

Are you going to go camping with them? You're not scared of being the _____?

I'm so _____ at my husband. He just bought a new car without talking to me about it.

He's _____. You need to break up with him.

Answers

killed it

went down

run out of gas

straight up

out of the loop

third wheel

pissed off

vanilla

Phrasal Verbs

Asking out

Meaning: Inviting someone to go on a date.

Examples:

I'm thinking about asking Samantha out . Do you think she'd say yes?

Did you hear that Danny asked out Tina and she said yes? I'm so happy for him!

I get so nervous asking a girl out . I'm way better at doing it via text than in person.

Battle it out

Meaning: Fight until there's a winner.

Examples:

Tom and Cam battle it out to the death over their new video game console. I don't understand why they don't just play two-player games.

You guys don't need to battle it out . Just do rock-scissor-paper to figure out who the winner is.

The Oilers and the Leafs are battling it out for first place in their division.

Blow me off

Meaning: Not pay attention to; disregard.

Examples:

I hate how Sam blows me off every time I ask for time off or need something from him at work.

You can't keep blowing me off . You'll eventually have to answer for what you did.

I get the feeling that Cara is blowing me off. She keeps cancelling our plans at the last possible minute.

Break out

Meaning: Deploy or start to use something.

Examples:

Let's break out the wine! It's the afternoon now, right?

I want to break out that game we bought last year. Settlers? We haven't even played it yet.

Why don't you break out some of those homemade pickles of yours? I love those things.

Call her up

Meaning: Phone her.

Examples:

Just call her up if you want to talk to her. It's obvious that you miss her.

I think you'll have to call him up . He doesn't respond to texts very often.

Call them up and just ask. You've already wasted so much time looking on their website. I don't think it's there.

Carried away

Meaning: Do something to an excessive degree.

Examples:

Don't get carried away here. I have a feeling that this project is going to get cancelled.

My kids get carried away with this new video game and before they know it, it's dinnertime and they're upset that they have to stop.

I get a bit carried away with Christmas decorations every year.

Check in

Meaning: See how someone is doing.

Examples:

When do you go for surgery? Next Thursday? I'll check in on Friday to see if you need anything.

I'm just calling to check in . How are you doing with everything?

Hey, I'm just checking in to see if you need anything before I leave for the night.

Chicken out

Meaning: Not do something due to nervousness.

Examples:

I was going to ask out Todd but I chickened out at the last minute.

Don't chicken out this time! You'll pass your test. You're ready.

I get so nervous about taking the driver's test that I always chicken out and cancel at the last minute.

Come across

Meaning: Give an impression; find.

Examples:

Did you come across any errors in the code? Something isn't quite right but I can't figure out what it is.

Ted came across as kind of a jerk. He barely even looked at me when Tina was introducing me to him.

If you come across any small canning jars at the thrift store, please buy them for me.

Come around

Meaning: Change your mind.

Examples :

He'll come around . Don't worry about it.

I'm worried that my boss won't come around to me working fewer hours.

She didn't want to go to Korea for vacation but she came around after I showed her how awesome it is there!

Come through

Meaning: Succeed at doing something.

Examples:

Don't worry. Keith is going to come through for us. He always does.

I know that I procrastinate, but I always come through in the end so please try not to worry about it.

Do you think Mary is going to come through with that donation? I haven't heard from her in a few days now.

Cut it out

Meaning: Stop doing something.

Examples:

Ted! Cut it out ! I don't want to hear you yelling inside the house.

I know you're not trying to be annoying but tapping your pen like that is driving me up the wall. Please cut it out.

Hey! Cut it out . I don't want to see you chewing with your mouth open.

Dealing with

Meaning: Handling.

Examples:

Can you please deal with this client? I'm so angry right now that I don't think I can do it and keep my cool.

I hate dealing with difficult customers at my job. Most of them are great but there are a few that ruin my day.

I'm dealing with so many things right now. Can you please give me a call tomorrow and I'll have more time to talk about it then?

Dress it up

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

Examples:

You don't have to dress it up for me. I'd rather know the truth.

Let's dress it up a little before we present it to Kristina. You know how she'll just reject it unless it's pretty.

I hate dressing things up to cover up for an inferior product. I'd rather work for a company that just has better products to start with.

End up

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

Examples:

Stay in school if you don't want to end up like Steve.

I don't want to end up with no job. I think I should just accept this one.

What if we end up not being able to sell this place in a year or two? I think we should put it on the market now before things fall apart.

Fall apart

Meaning: Break down.

Examples:

My work clothes are starting to fall apart . I need to buy some new ones.

I'm going to fall apart soon if I don't get some help here. You needed to hire new people months ago.

This house is falling apart . I told you that we shouldn't have bought such an old place.

Fall behind

Meaning: Not keep up to others.

Examples:

Min-Ji is starting to fall behind in math. I think we should get her a private tutor.

I'm falling behind and will need to work this weekend I think. Hopefully, I can get caught up if I do that.

During the race, I fell behind the leaders about halfway through and just couldn't match their pace.

Fight back

Meaning: Counterattack in a fight or battle.

Examples:

It's time to fight back against climate change. It's probably too late already! That's my biggest fear.

You can fight back in this situation. Why don't you talk to someone higher up in the company? I think it might help.

I want to fight back against these rumours. They aren't true and we're starting to get a bad reputation in the community because of them.

Phrasal Verbs Review #1

ask her out, fight back, blew me off, break out, falling apart, end up, deal with, cut it out, check in, call up, chickened out

Sorry, I can't come tonight. I have to _____ this thing at work.

Let's _____ that wine we got from your work. It looks expensive!

I can't believe Ted _____ again last night. I'm so tired of trying to make plans with him.

Hey, _____! I just need a few minutes of quiet.

I want to _____ but I _____ at the last minute.

The project is _____ since Tony went on vacation.

Why don't you _____ Tracy and see if she's free for dinner tonight?

Let's _____ with your cousin. Didn't he move last weekend?

Answers

deal with

break out

blew me off

cut it out

ask her out, chickened out

falling apart

call up

check in

Get ahead of yourself

Meaning: Look too far ahead; not focus on the initial things.

Examples :

Don't you think you're starting to get ahead of yourself ? Just worry about the next step and not the million other ones that will come later.

I always get ahead of myself with work projects and feel so stressed out.

You're getting ahead of yourself here. The first step is applying and if you don't get in, then you can deal with it then.

Get away with

Meaning: To do something bad but not receive punishment for it.

Examples:

I know that my kids think they can get away with so many things but I always know. I just don't bust them on everything.

Just because you can get away with it, doesn't mean that you should. You'll eventually get caught I think.

I got away with taking 2-hour lunch breaks for so many years at work. It was only when I got a new boss that I had to stop.

Get it over with

Meaning: Do something that you don't want to do.

Examples:

Just get it over with . Then you can enjoy the rest of your vacation.

I know you don't want to but it's better to get it over with than leave it to the last minute. That's so stressful to do that.

Come on. Let's get it over with . It'll only take us a couple of hours once we finally do it.

Go after

Meaning: Pursue someone or something.

Examples:

If you want to get into law school, you have to go after it. It won't be easy but I think that you can do it.

Go after what you want in life! Don't just sit back and wait for things to happen.

Go after your dream job! The worst that can happen is that you won't get it.

Go for it

Meaning: Encouraging someone to do something.

Examples:

I think you should go for it! It'll all work out in the end.

If you want that job, go for it. The worst that can happen is that they decide to hire someone else.

I'm going to go for it ! I'm tired of waiting for things to happen to me. I want to make my own luck.

Goofing around

Meaning: Being silly or joking with someone.

Examples:

Stop goofing around ! We need to get this kitchen cleaned up.

Tom and Jenny always start goofing around before bedtime and end up going to bed way too late.

I loved goofing around during class when I was a kid. My teachers must have hated me.

Grow up

Meaning: Get bigger or older.

Examples:

When I grow up , I want to be a firefighter.

When I was growing up , my parents got divorced and I spent time at both of their houses.

My brother and I grew up too quickly. My father died when we were young.

Hanging over

Meaning: Feeling upset or worried about something.

Examples :

Just finish it. It's been hanging over you for years now.

Do you think that Tom has a black cloud hanging over him? He's always grumpy about something.

This thesis is hanging over me. I'm not sure it'll ever be done.

Hang on

Meaning: Wait.

Examples:

Hang on a minute! I need to pack my lunch before we go.

Can you hang on for a minute? I'm just talking to your aunt on the phone right now.

If you can hang on for 10 minutes or so while I finish this up, I can drive you home.

Hit up

Meaning: Ask someone for something, usually a favour.

Examples:

Guess who hit me up this week? Ted! He wanted to borrow money again.

Why don't you hit up your company to see if they'll make a donation?
Don't they do this kind of thing regularly?

Hit up your Dad for that. I don't have any cash right now.

Hold back

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

Examples:

Don't hold back . Just tell me straight up what you want.

You have to hold back sometimes. You often get in trouble for saying things too bluntly.

Hold back a bit. Let's wait and see what they do first before we reveal too much.

Lighten up

Meaning: Relax; not take things so seriously.

Examples:

Hey, lighten up . This isn't a big deal.

Dad! Lighten up ! I don't know why you care so much if my room is clean, or not.

I wish you'd lighten up a bit on the kids about chores. They're already stressed out about all their schoolwork.

Look around

Meaning: Check out the items or a location.

Examples:

Have a look around . Let me know if you need help.

I'm going to have a look around and I'll let you know if I need anything.

Have a look around your room first. I think I last saw it here.

Look forward to

Meaning: Await something eagerly.

Examples:

I look forward to meeting you next week!

We're looking forward to going to Disneyland next year.

I've been looking forward to this concert for months now.

Look up

Meaning: Find something in a book or on the Internet, etc.

Examples:

Let me look up that phone number for you.

Do you want me to look it up ? It'll just take me 10 seconds.

I'll have to look up my ID number. I can't remember off the top of my head.

Narrow down

Meaning: Eliminate some possible options.

Examples:

I think we can narrow it down to either Sid or Sandra.

When you're doing a multiple choice test, narrow down the answers to the two most likely ones if you don't know.

We've narrowed down the options to either Fiji or Thailand.

Point out

Meaning: Highlight or feature.

Examples:

Let me point out all the things it can do. For example, . . .

Can you point out to me where all the used ones are? That's what I'm most interested in.

If I could point out the key features. The first one is . . .

Rule him out

Meaning: To eliminate, cancel, or discount someone (or something).

Examples:

I don't want to rule her out for that one mistake but it's difficult for me to overlook it.

I think we can rule him out . He doesn't even have the minimum qualifications.

Don't rule it out ! It's a great program and the tuition is way cheaper than other colleges.

Phrasal Verbs Review #2

get ahead of yourself , rule out, get it over with, point out, go for it, goofing around, hit up, hang on, lighten up, look around

I think we can _____ Sammy, right? He doesn't have enough experience.

Hey, _____! I don't think it's a big deal.

Let's just _____. I don't want to think about it anymore.

Stop _____ and just clean up your rooms. We're not going anywhere until you finish.

_____ a second. Didn't we already do that one?

Let's have a _____ first before buying one. I'm sure there's one in the garage somewhere.

_____! That's your dream job and it'd be crazy not to apply.

Please _____ that coffee shop you like. Aren't we driving right by it?

Answers

rule out

lighten up

get it over with

goofing around

hang on

look around

go for it

point out

Screwed up

Meaning: Not do something successfully.

Examples:

Sorry, I screwed u p. How can I make it up to you?

I screwed up my driving test three times before I finally passed.

Can you please look this paperwork over before I submit it? I'm worried that I screwed it up and I don't want it to get rejected again.

Slow down

Meaning: Don't move so quickly.

Examples:

Let's slow down here. It's easy to make mistakes with this kind of thing when going too quickly.

Please slow down . I think you're driving way too quickly. The roads are icy.

Can we slow down a bit? This relationship is getting serious too quickly.

Sneak in

Meaning: Being able to do something even though you're busy; go someplace you're not supposed to go.

Examples :

Do you think we can sneak in without paying? I've heard of people doing it.

I think I can sneak in a workout between work and dinner.

Let's sneak in at the last second. I hate making small talk before the meeting.

Spare you

Meaning: Save from dealing with or hearing about.

Examples :

I'll spare you the details but I'll just say that their divorce was so messy.

Spare me the excuses! I'm so tired of them.

I'll take care of it and spare you from dealing with the scary spiders!

Stick around

Meaning: Stay.

Examples :

Stick around after the meeting, okay? I'd love to catch up.

Can you stick around to help clean up after the event? I'd appreciate it.

I'm happy I stuck around after the concert. I got to meet the whole band and they signed my shirt.

Stick to

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

Examples:

I need to stick to my diet. My cheat day is on Friday, not Monday.

Just stick to the schedule, please. I don't want to make any changes because then I will have to change everyone's schedule.

Stick to the facts here!

Talk me into

Meaning: Convince.

Examples:

You're not going to talk me into this. I've already made up my mind about it.

My kids always try to talk me into going to the movies. It works though! We usually end up going almost every weekend.

You could probably talk me into it!

Think about

Meaning: Consider.

Examples:

I'll think about it. That doesn't mean yes. It just means that I'm open to it.

Think about your future! If you keep failing classes, what kind of job can you get?

I have to think about my son, too. I'm not sure changing schools is the best thing for him right now.

Turn down

Meaning: Refuse.

Examples :

I hate to turn down an offer for lunch but I'm so busy this week.

I had to turn down that offer on my place. They wanted weeks to complete the inspections.

You know that you can turn down overtime, right? I don't know why you keep agreeing to it when you hate it so much.

Turned out

Meaning: Finding out the result of something.

Examples:

In the end, it all turned out well. It was stressful though.

It's all going to turn out okay! You'll see.

It turned out that that guy Bob I was dating was already married and had a whole life in Toronto.

Wear me down

Meaning: Make me feel tired and weary.

Examples:

My job is starting to wear me down. There's more and more to do as the year comes to an end.

My kids think they can wear me down if they keep asking for that new video game system. How wrong they are!

I need to exercise or I can't sleep. I need something to wear me down so I can finally relax.

Work something out

Meaning: Make a deal.

Examples:

I'm confident that we can work something out. Let me talk to my boss and see what she says.

Can we work something out here? We are not that far apart in our offers.

Please work something out with that supplier. There's no excuse for them to deliver products days late.

Phrasal Verbs Review #3

screwed up, slow down , think about, stick to, turned out, wear down, work something out, talk me into, looking forward to, hold back

Please _____. The speed limit is 60 km/hour here.

The movies? You could _____ it.

I think I _____ at work today. I hope my boss doesn't find out.

I'm _____ to my trip to Japan next month.

We can _____ on price.

Let's _____ the original plan.

Everything _____ okay in the end.

Don't _____. I'd rather know the truth.

Answers

slow down

talk me into

screwed up

looking forward to

work something out

stick to

turned out

hold back

Before You Go

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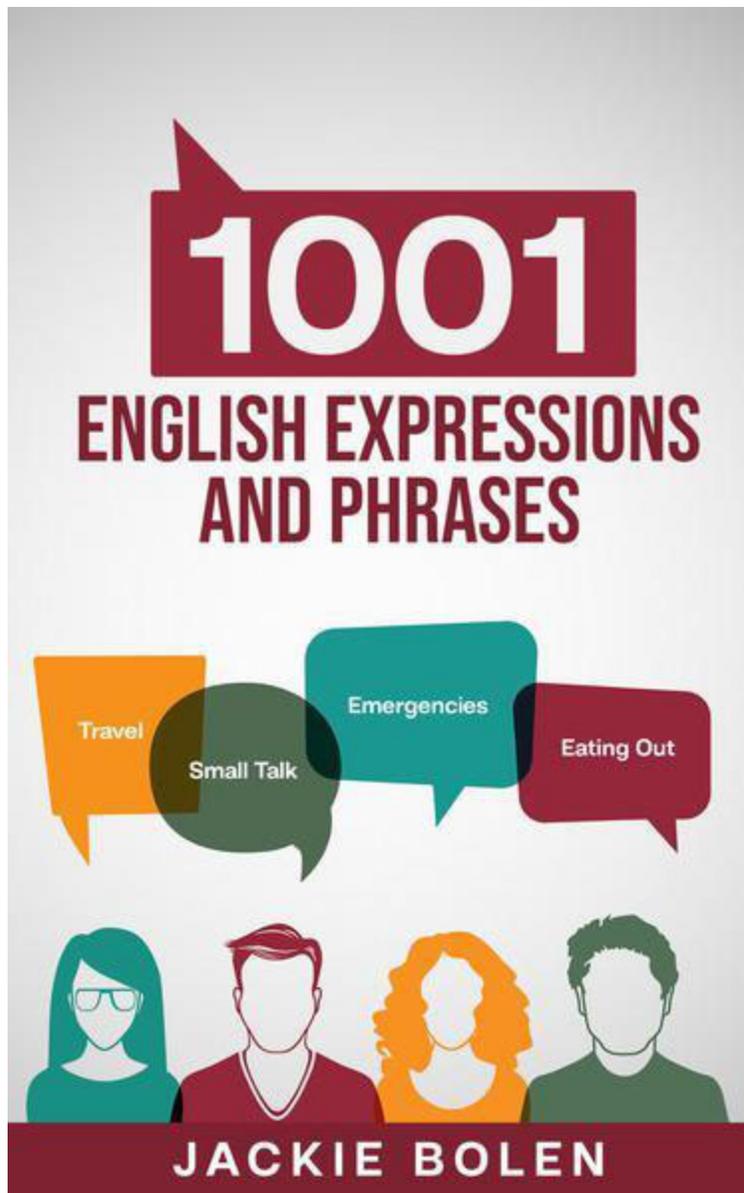
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