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FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS, Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

Design of a booklet to teach idioms in conversation classes to third-term students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca

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RESUMEN

Los modismos forman parte del idioma Inglés lo que lo hace más colorido y pintoresco; como en la mayoría de veces, estas expresiones describen mejor una situación que cuando se utiliza palabras literales. Ya que las expresiones idiomáticas están en las conversaciones diarias, su enseñanza debería ser vista como un elemento importante, especialmente para aquellas personas cuyo objetivo es dominar el lenguaje estudiado; este es el caso de los estudiantes de tercer ciclo de la escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa de la Universidad de Cuenca. Con el propósito de presentar modismos a este grupo objeto, se ha diseñado un librito que compila los modismos más comúnmente usados. Para empezar la recolección de estos modismos, se establecieron diez categorías para limitar su búsqueda. A partir de esto, trecientos modismos fueron recolectados, los cuales a su vez, pasaron por un proceso de filtración usando el Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) reduciéndolos a ciento veinte modismos. Este grupo de modismos, divididos en sus categorías, fue analizado por ochenta nativo hablantes del idioma inglés por medio de encuestas para obtener el grupo final de los ochenta modismos más comúnmente usados. Este grupo de modismos fue la base para el desarrollo de este librito. De acuerdo, a las respuestas de los nativo hablantes, las categorías más populares fueron: amor con 639 votos de 640; seguidos por la categoría: dar consejo con 638 votos y escuela con 634.

Palabras clave: modismos, expresiones idiomáticas, lenguaje figurativo, contexto, librito, COCA, nativo hablantes, grupo objeto.



ABSTRACT

Idioms form part of the English language making it more colorful and vivid; as most of the time, these expressions describe a situation in a better way than literal words. Since idiomatic expressions are in everyday conversations, their teaching should be seen as an important element, especially for those people whose aim is mastering the target language; this is the case of third-term students of the English Language and Literature school at Universidad de Cuenca. For the purpose of introducing idioms to this target group, a booklet that compiles the most commonly used idioms has been designed. To start the collection of those idioms, ten categories were established to limit their search. From this, three hundred idioms were gathered which, in turn, went through a process of filtration using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) narrowing them down to one hundred twenty idioms. This group of idioms, divided in their categories, was analyzed by eighty native English speakers by means of surveys, in order to obtain the final group of the eighty most commonly used idioms. This group of idioms was the basis for the development of this booklet. According to the native English speakers' answers, the categories which were most popular are: love with 639 checks out of 640, followed by giving advice with 638, and school with 634.

Key words: idioms, idiomatic expressions, figurative language, context, booklet, COCA, native speakers, target group.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty who gives me life, listens to me, and helps me every single moment. It is also dedicated to my beloved parents, Daniel and Dilma, for their unconditional love, support, and comprehension. Without them, I would not be what I am now. To my siblings, Darwin and Paola, who give me a hand when I need them more and make me laugh when I want to cry.

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INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions are an inseparable part of the English language. They represent cultural features that make the language dynamic, colorful, and lively. Due to this fact, idioms must not be ignored in the teaching process of any language, especially if the purpose of studying that language is mastering it to teach it, as in the case of the English Language and Literature school of Universidad de Cuenca. Since there is a great variety of idioms, students from the above-mentioned school should know at least the most commonly used ones. However, from the analysis of the syllabus and the content of the books, it was found that there is not enough complementary material for the teaching of idioms in their instructional process.

For this reason, the main objective of this project is to determine which are the most commonly used English idioms by young adult native speakers. Furthermore, these idioms were compiled in a booklet containing contextualized activities to reinforce the teaching-learning process in classes of Conversation II.

This study consists of six chapters. The first chapter gives an explanation of the problem that motivated this project, together with its justification to carry it out. Also, the general and specific objectives are included in this chapter. The second chapter is related to the literature review of this study, which is divided in two parts. The first one is about idioms themselves: definition, types of idioms, fixed and sociolinguistic aspects of idioms. The second part relates to idioms in the EFL classroom: their importance when learning a foreign language, benefits of using them in the EFL classroom, constraints and



solutions when teaching idioms in the EFL classroom, among others. The third chapter involves the methodology applied in the development of this project and the data gathering techniques which were the three filters, and they are: the different sources such as the internet, books, dictionaries, and TV programs; the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA); and a survey applied to eighty native English speakers. In addition, the methodology applied in the booklet is presented. The fourth chapter contains the results of the three filters used in this study. The results are also presented in statistical charts and tables, along with their analysis and interpretation. The fifth chapter consists of the booklet that includes ten units which are love, health, school, business, food, work, having problems, giving advice, describing people's personality, and expenses. Moreover, a teacher's guide and an answer sheet are presented to complement the booklet. Finally, the sixth chapter is about conclusions and recommendations that are given to sustain all the process that has been carried out in this project.



I. THE PROBLEM

1.1 Topic

The aim of this project is to collect the most commonly used idioms by means of an analysis of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and surveys directed to native English speakers. With this information, a booklet will be designed, whose content is expected to be a helpful material for teaching this topic in conversation classes to third-term students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca.

1.2 Description of the problem

The teaching-learning process of English, as a foreign language, should not only be based on the acquisition of grammatical patterns; on the contrary, teachers should give a great deal of importance to how English is used and how this language is spoken by native English speakers.

Since idioms cannot be translated word for word, they are considered difficult to understand because the meaning of the phrase is not equal to their semantic elements; what most of the time makes idioms seem non-logical. As reported by Johnson-Laird quoted in Paul Mcpherron and Patrick T. Randolph's book, *Cat Got Your Tongue*:

If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist. They are a feature of discourse that frustrates any simple logical account of how the meanings of utterances depend on the meanings of their parts and on the syntactic relation among those parts. (6)



Due to the complexity of idioms, teachers opt to ignore them in the teaching process thus avoiding an important aspect of the English language. Huong, in his study, *An Explorative Study of Idiom Teaching for Pre-Service Teachers of English*, points out that:

Students and teachers tend to traditionally avoid idiomatic expressions in English. This prevents students from the exposure to multi-word units in English. Thus, students cannot profoundly understand the communicative meanings of multi-word units in the right context. (76)

Besides the complexity of idioms, foreign language learners (FLL) face the difficulty of being in an environment where English is not spoken outside the classroom making it hard for them to learn the target language in a natural way. On the other hand, second language learners (SLL) have an advantage because they are in contact with the target language inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, it is easier for SLL to learn idioms whereas FLL have to be presented idioms if they want to use the target language more authentically and currently.

Since this project will be directed to third-term students who are foreign language learners in conversation classes, it was important to find out about the teaching practices of idioms in these classes. For this purpose, two teachers of conversation classes, Lcdo. Juan José Santillán and Master Corbin Campbell, who were in charge of third-term students from the September 2014 - February 2015 semester, were interviewed. Santillán claims that the teaching of idioms is “an important element of the target language content and culture; and they are



needed to achieve communicative competence” (Santillán). Additionally, Campbell states that idioms “expand the sociolinguistic competence of the students, which contributes to improve language learning” (Campbell). However, they both state that the content of the syllabus for conversation classes does not include idioms per se; and in some cases, teachers do not have the opportunity to add as much as they desire to this topic in their classes since they are bound to keep up with the programmed schedule.

Moreover, it was found that the books, used in third semester conversation classes *Let's Talk I* and *Let's Talk II*, contain just a minimum percentage of idioms which makes students unaware of this essential part of the English language.

1.3 Justification

The purpose of learning a language is communication; however, this achievement has become a significant problem to accomplish for many foreign language learners. Experience shows that one of the main reasons is that most of the words and phrases are learnt in isolation. Alice Omaggio in her book *Teaching Language in Context* states that:

Vocabulary words or dialogue lines that are memorized rotely but that are not integrated into existing cognitive structure might easily be lost later. [...] Rotely learned information cannot be changed or paraphrased unless it is processed meaningfully. (67)

Contextualization, on the other hand, is a good strategy used to learn words and phrases meaningfully. Based on a study directed by Alice Marie Johnson, “teaching a second language in a narrative context facilitates using



words productively within sentences to a greater degree than generating disconnected sentences in traditional instructional practices.”(27) Therefore, it can be said that contextualizing words and phrases is of vital importance when the aim is mastering a language. Moreover, according to Martin Montminy, “Context [...] plays an important role in communication.” (1)

Continuing with this idea, English idioms are phrases with figurative connotation whose meaning cannot be understood literally. For that reason, idioms have to be taught in context in order to be understood properly and used by students in a meaningful way. A researcher, Eliana Roberto De Caro, points out that “the use of idioms has a great influence in the teaching and learning process of a foreign language because it could be one of the ways to give students better conditions to improve the communicative skill in the daily context” (124).

Additionally, according to Dimitrios Thanasoulas, “foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom.” To support this idea, Milena Miladinovic claims that:

Students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language. From simple, everyday things, like forms of address to appropriate ways of expressing disagreement, culture forms an integral part of the language learning curricula. In any case, in order for



communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior, not only linguistic rules in the narrow sense.

For these reasons, it is appropriate to mention that idioms form an essential part of English-speaking countries' culture, and they denote the natural way in which native English speakers use the language every day.

Idioms are very important since they are part of the English language itself. Eliana Roberto de Caro states that:

English is a language particularly rich in idioms - those modes of expression peculiar to a language (or dialect) which frequently defy logical and grammatical rules. Without idioms English would lose much of its variety and humor both in speech and writing.

(124)

Additionally, Jackeline Ambrose states that “idioms share cultural and historical information and broaden people’s understanding and manipulation of a language.” (180)

Besides, Judith Kuster points out that “teaching figurative language is often an important part of treatment for children and adults [...] who are learning English as a second language. One interesting component of figurative language is the understanding and use of idioms.” This being said, the teaching of idioms cannot be separated from the process of learning a foreign language regardless the learner’s age.

Because the aim of the English Language and Literature school is to master the English language, idioms cannot be avoided in the students’ learning



process since they are a fundamental aspect of the English language. Because of this, a booklet on idioms will be designed as complement material for third-semester students at Universidad de Cuenca who should start familiarizing with this part of language and developing their comprehension of figurative speech.

All of this motivates and justifies designing a booklet with various activities to help students reinforce their learning of the most commonly used idioms.

1.4 Research question

- What are the English idioms which are most commonly used by young adult native speakers?

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 General objective

- To determine the English idioms which are most commonly used by young adult native speakers and to incorporate them into a booklet containing contextualized readings, conversation scripts, and activities to reinforce the teaching-learning process of idioms in Conversation II class of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

- To carry out bibliographical research to support the importance of teaching idioms in EFL environments.
- To compile three hundred idioms through research on the internet, books, dictionaries, and TV programs, which will be divided equally into ten categories.



- To determine which are the twelve most frequently used idioms in each category, by means of an analysis of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).
- To develop and carry out a survey among eighty native English speakers to determine from the previously selected idioms, the eight most commonly used ones in each category.
- To incorporate the final group of selected idioms in the development of EFL activities to be compiled in a booklet.



2. IDIOMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN EFL ENVIRONMENTS

2.1 Brief description of some aspects about idioms

2.1.1 Definition of idioms

Since this project is related to idioms, it would be appropriate to establish some definitions about them which are founded in the American Heritage dictionary and mentioned by authors such as Linda Corelli in order to get a better idea of the topic.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines idioms as “A speech form or an expression of a given language that is peculiar to itself grammatically or cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements.” Linda Corelli, a writer for Omniglot website, also defines idioms “as an expression that does not mean what it literally says. Hence, its meaning is often quite different from the word-for-word translation” (“Idioms: Piece of Cake or Hard Nut to Crack?”). To expand this idea, The Idiom Connection website says that an idiom “is a phrase which does not always follow the normal rules of meaning and grammar” (“What is an idiom?”).

In other words, an idiom is a phrase or expression whose meaning cannot be deduced literally from its constituent words, but rather its meaning must be understood as a whole. To illustrate this idea, the literal meaning of each word used in the idiom *heard through the grapevine* does not have anything to do with its actual meaning as a whole. Grapevines cannot be directly related to an unofficial piece of information or a rumor, which is the meaning of the idiom.



Idioms make English a colorful and dynamic language and most of the time, they can express something better than formal speech. To illustrate this idea, an example taken from the book *Cat Got Your Tongue?* shows the interaction between Captain Kirk and Dr. Spock in the film *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.

— Captain Kirk: If we play our cards right, we may be able to find out when those whales are being released.

— Dr. Spock: How will playing cards help?

Captain Kirk could have simply stated something such as, “If we proceed in the correct manner, we will be able to ascertain when the whales are being released.” In fact, the aforementioned sentence resembles something Dr. Spock would probably say. Thus, it is certain that idioms and idiomatic language make our language more colorful, and they easily provide learners with a way to subtly express their thoughts and sound more proficient (Mcpherron and Randolph, 6).

2.1.2 Types of idioms

Researchers such as Makkai, Fernando, McCarthy, and O’Dell have taken into consideration the importance of distinguishing one idiom from another based on different criteria in order to offer a clearer idea about idioms.

2.1.2.1 Makkai’s classification of idioms

This author, quoted in, Leah’s work, *Idioms - Grammaticality and Figurativeness*, divides idioms into two groups: decoding and encoding.



Idioms of decoding (Non-identifiable): this type of idiom is difficult to understand since its meaning cannot, in any way, be literally translated. Makkai states that “Idioms of decoding refer to those non-identifiable and misleading lexical expressions whose interpretation could not be figured out by using only independently learned linguistic conventions” (qtd. in Leah, 10). For instance, this idiom *to kick the bucket* cannot be interpreted literally because its real meaning is *to die*.

At the same time, Makkai sub-classifies this type of idioms into lexemic and sememic idioms; this classification is found in Leah’s work (10).

- Lexemic idioms include:
 - a. Phrasal verbs: e.g., to come up with, to turn off, to take part in.
 - b. Phrasal compounds: e.g. black ice, black board.
 - c. Incorporating Verbs: e.g. man-handle.
 - d. Pseudo-Idioms: e.g. spick and span, kit and kin
- Sememic Idioms, on the other hand, usually, convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture. They include:
 - a. Proverbs: e.g. Kill two birds with one stone, a bird in hand is worth two in the bush.
 - b. Familiar Quotations: e.g. Not a mouse stirring.

Idioms of encoding (Identifiable): the meaning of this type of idiom can be or not be understood at first sight depending on the speaker’s knowledge. Based on Makkai’s definition, encoding idioms are “those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meanings. This type of idiom could be best recognized through making a comparison between different languages...” (qtd.



in Leah, 9-10). For instance: the Spanish phrase *atender la puerta* is similar to the idiom *answer the door*.

2.1.2.2 Fernando's classification of idioms

Fernando, who was quoted in Shojaei's *Translation of Idioms and Fixed Expressions: Strategies and Difficulties* (1223), provides another similar classification to Makkai's. He divides idioms into three sub-classes as follows:

Pure Idioms: a kind of conventionalized phrase that is non-literal. This type of idiom does not have a literal meaning, however some idioms can have a little variation while others cannot. These idioms are also known as opaque. For example, *to spill the beans*

Semi-idioms: for this sort of idiom, one or more of its constituent words have a literal meaning, while at least one of its words has a non-literal meaning. These idioms are considered somewhat opaque. For instance, *to know the ropes*.

Literal idioms: they are considered to be easily interpreted since their constituents can be taken literally. They are also called transparent. For instance, *to put yourself in someone's shoes*.

2.1.2.3 McCarthy and O'Dell's classification of idioms

McCarthy and O'Dell, in their book *English Idioms in Use* (6), made another distinction about the various types of idioms based on their possible combinations:



Form	Example	Meaning
Verb + object / complement (and / or adverbial)	kill two birds with one stone	produce two useful results by just doing one action
prepositional phrase	in the blink of an eye	in an extremely short time
Compound	a bone of contention	something which people argue and disagree over
simile (as + adjective + as, or like + noun)	as dry as a bone	very dry indeed
binomial (word + and + word)	rough and ready	crude and lacking sophistication
trinomial (word + word + and + word)	cool, calm and collected	relaxed, in control, not nervous
whole clause or sentence	to cut a long story short	to tell the main points but not all the fine details

2.1.3 Fixed aspects of idioms

Eliana Roberto De Caro points out that “English is a language particularly rich in idioms - those modes of expression peculiar to a language (or dialect) which frequently defy logical and grammatical rules” (124). Thus, most idioms do not follow the grammar rules that are normally applied, and they cannot be altered in relation to their grammatical form; therefore, they are fixed

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expressions. However, according to McCarthy and O'Dell in their book *English Idioms in Use*, "the grammar or vocabulary -of idioms- can be varied slightly." The following table provided by these authors, in their book on page 6, explains when these changes can occur.

Variation	Example
Occasionally an idiom in the active voice can be used in the passive.	Government Ministers always pass the buck if they are challenged about poverty. [blame somebody else / refuse to accept responsibility] The buck has been passed from Minister to Minister. No one seems prepared to accept the responsibility.
Some verb-based idioms also have no compound forms.	There is too much buck-passing in government nowadays. No one accepts the blame for anything.
One or more words in the idiom can be varied.	Stop acting the fool / goat! [stop acting stupidly]

Nonetheless, Mona Baker in her book *In Other Words* page 63 claims that there are five exceptions that cannot usually be done to an idiom, unless the speaker wants to make a joke or attempts to play on words, and they are the following:

- The word order of the idiom cannot be changed.

Example: *hold your horses* cannot be changed to *your hold horses*.



- An extra word cannot be added to the idiom.

Example: *the girl next door* has to be kept in this form. It is impossible to add another word to it since it would lose its essence.

- One of its constituents cannot be omitted.

Example: *love at first sight* has four components in it, and all of them have to be used, otherwise, it would not be possible to identify it as an idiom.

- The words that form the idiom cannot be replaced.

Example: *to go south*, none of these words can be replaced. One cannot use an idiom such as *to go north*.

- Its grammatical structure cannot be altered.

Example: *to face the music* has to maintain its grammatical structure. It cannot be altered or written as *the music is faced*.

In agreement with Mona Baker's idea about grammatical characteristics of idioms, Long and Summers also share some of her opinions that is stated in Zapata's study sheet *Sociolinguistic Variations* (7). It is necessary to state that the illustrations for each aspect were written by the authors of this project.

- The words in an idiom cannot be substituted by synonymous words without the loss of their idiomaticity or metaphorical meaning.

Example: the idiom *to make ends meet* cannot be changed to *do ends meet*.

- Modifiers such as adjectives or adverbs cannot often be introduced into idioms.



Example: *back to the wall* cannot be used with added adverbs and/or adjectives; it is not correct to say *back to the really high wall*.

- Passive voice is not often used.

Example: the idiom *to ace* cannot be used in the passive voice. The correct form is: Amy *aced* the exam. Not: The exam *was aced* by Amy.

- Some idioms have slight variations in at least one of their constituents.

Example: In the idiom *to be in someone's good/bad books*, the adjectives good and bad can be interchangeable depending on what the person wants to say.

Despite certain aspects of the grammatical form of idioms and their restrictions, there are no specific rules about how and when idioms can be changed according to the speaker's intention. Mona Baker states that,

A person's competence in actively using the idioms and fixed expressions of a foreign language hardly ever matches that of a native speaker. The majority of translators working into a foreign language cannot hope to achieve the same sensitivity that native speakers seem to have for judging when and how an idiom can be manipulated. (64)

The only way for foreign language learners to make sure if an idiom is flexible is by consulting a dictionary, researching on the internet, or asking a native English speaker.

2.1.4 Sociolinguistic aspects of idioms

It was stated before that the purpose of learning a foreign language is to use it in a communicative way. However, Claire Ann Mizne points out that

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communicating in a second –and foreign– language involves difficulties for learners due to problems in pronunciation, lack of knowledge on actual speech, and the non-use of idiomatic expressions and slang. She expands her idea by saying that another contributing factor for incompetence when using the language is that:

The speaker does not know which utterances are appropriate in the social situation in which he or she is speaking. This ability to adjust one's speech to fit the situation in which it is said is called sociolinguistic competence, and without this ability, even the most perfectly grammatical utterances can convey a meaning entirely different from that which the speaker intended (*Teaching Sociolinguistic Competence in the ESL classroom*).

Speakers must take into account that when talking, their words not only depend on the correct grammatical rules but also on the social situation in which they are in. With these considerations in mind, their message can be conveyed clearly without being misinterpreted.

As reported by Canale and Swain, quoted by Lisa Pearson in *My Sheltered Toolkit*, a useful website for English Language teachers, sociolinguistic competence “refers to [an] individual’s knowledge of how to produce and understand language in social situations.” It is common knowledge that language has a purpose: asking a question, persuading, giving advice, or commanding are situations where the speaker has to know how to use the language appropriately so that the speaker’s purpose is not misunderstood. Sociolinguistic competence not only encompasses conveying messages but



also understanding and interpreting messages in social situations (“Canale & Swain”). If a person has sociolinguistic competence, he or she knows how to give a message without feeling out of place, and he/she will have the confidence of interpreting other people’s intentions well.

Sociolinguistic competence involves taking into account some characteristics about the person you are talking to, such as age, gender, and social status. The place and situation in which the speaker is has to be considered as well. According to Schroeder in his short work “Sociolinguistic Competence (Michael Canale & Merrill Swain)” found in the *SLAEncyclopediaF10 website*, “expressing attitude or emotion, understanding formal vs. informal, and knowing/recognizing common slang or idiomatic expressions” are all part of sociolinguistic competence. The speech used when talking to a friend is quite different from the one used to talk to a superior, for instance. This is part of everyone’s social behavior and the way people express themselves in front of others.

Backing this idea, Bachman and Palmer mention that a subcomponent of sociolinguistic knowledge is idiomatic expressions (qtd. in Bagarić and Mihaljević Djigunović, 101). They are part of the language itself; consequently, they are a fragment of the culture and society in which English language is spoken. Therefore, idioms should be included in the process of learning a second language without forgetting the fact that they must be taught in context to show the real situation in which they are used. Therefore, learners will not be afraid of misusing them. Idioms are used in every social setting and when a person does not understand an idiom that is used in a conversation, he/she



might lose track of that conversation and end up feeling confused or what is even worse, misunderstanding the speaker's intention.

As a result, idioms are an essential part of sociolinguistic competence which must be considered in the process of learning a language, and second language learners should be aware of it especially when they have to interact with native speakers. Once the learner knows the idiom and the situation in which it is used, he/she will have the confidence of not being misunderstood or misunderstanding other people.

2.2 Idioms in the EFL classroom

2.2.1 Importance of idioms when learning a foreign language

As it has been said before, idioms are a lively, dynamic, and vivid part of the language. They are used in everyday conversations, TV programs, movies, magazines, newspapers, the internet, advertisements, among others. The Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, quoted in Maisa and Karunakaran's work *Idioms and Importance of Teaching Idioms to ESL Students: A Study on Teacher Beliefs* on page 3, states that idioms are frequently found in all types of languages either written or spoken, informal or formal. If learners can understand and use idioms assuredly and properly, their language skills will increase rapidly. Elaborating this idea, Chris Went affirms that slang and idioms are spoken every day, and he also states that "it is important that foreign students are aware of the most common forms they are likely to encounter, - and- the appropriate use of these language forms." Since idioms form an integral part of the English language, they should not be neglected either by teachers or by learners.



The learning of idioms should be carried out if the learners' purpose is to master the target language and make their speech sound like a native speaker. For this reason, learners should not avoid learning idioms since they play such an important role in the language. Eliana Roberto De Caro claims that students tend to feel embarrassed and frustrated when they cannot comprehend an idiom used in a conversation. She also points out that a strong knowledge of idioms can help learners be better speakers. Implementing idioms in the language gives it a natural, conversational, and creative feel. Thus, the use of idioms helps learners speak English fluently like a native speaker (129). Correspondingly, this author concludes her work by saying that

this language component -idioms- is a way to help student[s] understand [...] native English speakers, movies, songs and increase their lexicon, because when students know how to use idioms, they feel better and they can trust [...] themselves since they are able to understand what English speakers want to express by using them. (135)

Moreover, it can be said that when learners become skilled at using idioms, they can speak the language authentically and understand it confidently even when they are interacting with a native speaker.

To explain better the aforementioned ideas, a paragraph from LearningEnglishA-Z website has been extracted:

Before you go ahead and learn idioms, consider these sentences
– If you want to speak English like a native, then you have *no other go* but to learn idioms. If you are hitting on any other website



[...] then you are *barking up the wrong tree*, because we are the *cat's whiskers* when it comes to English resources, and we make learning English *a piece of cake*. Remember, we're here to *give you a hand* and teach you English *at a fast clip*.

The paragraph, quoted above, contains idiomatic expressions on it, and any person who does not know at least one of them, would either lose track of the idea or fail to understand it totally. The use of idioms, according to LearningEnglishA-Z website, “create[s] a magical effect in the language -since idioms make the English language sound very warm, informal, easy-going, interesting and creative.”

In conclusion, using idioms is an essential aspect that should be taken into account when learning a language since idioms incite learners to sound more native-like. Once the learner feels comfortable with some idioms, he/she will be able to use them *at the drop of a hat*, which in turn, will *blow the listener's mind*.

2.2.2 Benefits of using idioms in the EFL classroom

After understanding the great importance of idioms in the learning process, it is appropriate to mention the benefits of using them in the EFL classroom.

Idioms belong to figurative language since they are combinations of words whose meanings have another sense from their literal words. This being said, Irene López y Elena María García say that “a working awareness of figurative language [...] is a valuable tool for learners since it can facilitate comprehension, aid communicative interactions between native and non-native



speakers, extend vocabulary, and help interpret and store new language items” (244). When people communicate, they do not always express themselves in a literal way, but unconsciously they use the language with a figurative connotation; a clear example of this can be seen in the use of idioms. Consequently, it can be deduced that idioms benefit learners since they expand their vocabulary and make comprehension and interaction easier with native speakers.

Another benefit of idioms stated by Eliana Roberto de Caro is that they offer better conditions to develop the communicative skill in real life situations (124). Sometimes, idioms can convey a message in a better way than using the common words in a literal sense. For instance, the idiom *to have a crush on* means, according to the Urban Dictionary, “a burning desire to be with someone who you find very attractive and extremely special.” This idiom exemplifies how an idiomatic expression can convey a meaning in a shorter and better way than literal words can.

— Ann: Loren, have you seen him? You know, the guy I *have a crush on!*

— Loren: Who? I don’t know who you are talking about!!!

If we change the idiom with common words, it would look like:

— Ann: Loren, have you seen him? You know the guy *for whom I feel an intense love!*

— Loren: Who? I don’t know who you are talking about!!!

It can be noticed that the idiom used in this example expresses a message in less and simpler words than those with a literal meaning.



Furthermore, it makes the used language more vivid, natural and friendlier, and this is the way how a native speaker would really say such a message.

Boers et al., quoted in Huong's paper on page 77, also contributes to this idea by highlighting other benefits of using idiomatic expressions to language learners in the following points:

- Learners can recall idioms in chunks of multi-word units, which keep learners from hesitating temporarily in their speech.
- Idioms assist fluency.
- Idioms help learners sound more native-like.

Wray, who is also quoted in Huong's work, has also discovered other benefits of using idiomatic expressions by analyzing the role of figurative idioms in speakers' production and listener's comprehension. According to this author, idioms tend to help speakers both with making shorter processing routes and organizing discourse. Idioms also assist listeners in deeply understanding the speaker's world and indicating the speaker's own identity (77). Thus, it can be inferred that idioms help learners simplify what they are going to say by using idiomatic expressions that most of the time encompass whatever situation they are in. In addition, learners can better understand the speaker's background.

Concluding the idea of how the use of idioms benefits learners, this part of figurative language aids in the learner's speaking and listening skills. In speaking, idioms increase lexicon that can be retrieved as a whole when talking; they can facilitate fluency, and they make learners produce the language and sound in a more natural way. In listening, idioms also help



learners better understand what a native speaker is saying and to comprehend his/her world more fully.

2.2.3 Teaching idioms in the EFL classroom: Constraints and Solutions

The learning process is filled with difficulty for learners especially when the topic is something new for them. Idioms are not an exception to this statement due to their different aspects that make them hard to understand and learn. It is the teachers' job to foresee possible constraints that their students may encounter and find possible solutions to those issues. Possible constraints that learners might face and the elements of idiomatic expressions make them such a challenging part of language as described below:

- The meaning of an idiomatic expression does not depend on the literal sense of the words that compound them: for own experience, when learning a foreign language, learners tend to compare the target language with their mother tongue, and most of the time, they tend to make the mistake of translating something that they want to express literally. Maria de Lourdes Moscoso claims that “translation is natural and almost inevitable to students in bilingual classrooms...” (1) This strategy to understand foreign words one by one is useless when it comes to idioms since their meaning must be taken as a whole. When word-by-word translation is attempted, learners feel frustrated since the result is not a correct translation of the phrase.
- The grammar of idiomatic expressions is quite difficult to comprehend: idioms do not follow a structural pattern or grammatical rules. As



Zhengyuan Liu says, “idioms tend to be frozen in form and meaning and [do not] allow change in structure and meaning” (105). However, some idioms can be changed in their structure as follows:

- One of their constituents can be replaced by another word.
- By altering the structure of the phrase, the voice can change from active to passive, and
- It is possible to conjugate them in some tenses.

For these reasons, learners get confused because they do not know for certain when and which idioms can be modified in their structure.

- They are multi-word units: most idioms are phrases with two or more words in them. If learners attempt to reduce the length of an idiom by eliminating one of its constituents, the idiom itself will be altered to a set of words that no longer have the same meaning.
- Culture: as it has been stated before, idioms share cultural characteristics that belong to a certain place. If learners ignore the culture that is behind the idioms, they will not only misunderstand them, but they also will be unable to use them correctly in speech.

These constraints are usually found in the idiom-learning process which often makes idioms difficult to learn. Thus, teachers must find out the possible solutions in order to facilitate the teaching and learning of idioms.

It is imperative to teach idioms in context. This not only allows learners to better grasp the meaning of the idiom but also to perceive how to use it according to a specific situation. According to Claudia Pesce, “to ensure that



students not only understand [idioms], but also learn to use them [and] present idiom examples in context” (“How to Teach English Idioms and their Meaning”).

Teachers need to present the same idiom in different contexts so that learners can compare and identify other situations in which the idiom is used.

Since the grammar of idioms is unpredictable, teachers must investigate in advance any possible modifications an idiom can have. These variations have to be taught to learners so that they can feel confident in knowing how to use an idiom correctly and avoid misusing it grammatically.

Idioms are culture, and teachers should not avoid this fact. If they do, they will be neglecting an important aspect of idiomatic expressions. This aspect is additionally helpful for students to better understand the proper use of idioms. Virginia Canabal indicates that “[idioms] are the heritage of history and product of cultural evolution. Consequently, we can learn a lot about culture through studying idioms and in turn get [a] better understanding of idioms by learning the cultural background behind them” (“The Relationship between Idioms and Culture”).

In brief, the idiom-learning process can present some stumbling blocks for learners; however, teachers should not feel afraid of this fact but look for strategies that help solve these difficult situations. In this way, Effort spent teaching idioms will not be a waste of time, but a valuable opportunity to help learners feel more comfortable using idiomatic expressions.

2.2.4 Previous studies about idioms in the learning process

Nowadays, studies about idioms have been carried out, and they have shown significantly the importance of teaching idioms in an EFL context.



Researchers have proved, based on different approaches, that the teaching of idioms has been beneficial for the participants' speaking skill to some extent. In order to support these ideas, the following previous studies have been analysed.

Teaching and learning idioms in a foreign language context has been claimed to be a difficult process. A study about this topic was made in Vietnam by Huong Quynh Tran. His study implemented a mixed-method study case approach in which there were two groups of participants. The first group was formed by 9 teachers whose experience ranged from 5 to 17 years. The second group was formed by 56 pre-service teachers who were training to become high school teachers. The data was collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and email-guided reflective writing. The author focused his study on three main points which played an important role in this project. His first point was the "criteria for selecting idioms for teaching" (Huong, 78), the second one was teaching methods and approaches, and the last one was idiom-related activities. The first point established that the selection of idioms, to be taught in an EFL classroom, must be made by taking into account how frequently they are used and how compatible they are for the students' language level. Regarding the second point about the teaching methods and approaches, the information taken from Harmer's study quoted in Huong's work, determined that idioms were taught mostly from reading and listening activities which are receptive skills rather than productive. However, some students who participated in the interview stated that they would prefer that learning idioms in the classroom be more focused on speaking and writing activities or productive



skills. The same data showed that idioms are learned better by using “idiom-related teaching activities that are designed in integrated skill tasks” (Huong, 84) using both productive and receptive skills. Idioms are contextualized in listening or reading tasks (receptive skills), and then reinforced with a speaking and/or writing activity (productive skills). These activities varied from idiom to idiom sharing, matching, and role-playing. In the interview, pre-service teachers stated that fun activities such as games can be beneficial for learning idioms. Huong's research paper concluded by stating that “idiom[s] teaching should focus more on idiom[s] practice in activities...” (Huong, 84).

Another study by Zahra Fotovatnia and Ghazal Khaki focuses on the techniques for teaching idioms. Its purpose was to compare the efficiency of three different techniques for teaching idioms; namely, L1 translation, L2 definition and synonyms, and pictorial representation of the idioms in terms of L2 learners' mastery of these idioms in an Iranian context. Also, it aimed to see “if there was any interaction between these three techniques of teaching idioms, and learning the form and meaning of the same idioms.” (Fotovatnia, Zahra and Ghazal Khaki, 274) The participants were selected from 120 Iranian TEFL undergraduates who were studying in four conversation classes at Islamic Azad University of Najaf Abad. “They were homogenized through an Oxford Placement Test. Only 68 students were selected.” (Fotovatnia, Zahra and Ghazal Khaki, 274) The idioms were presented by pictures in the first class; in the second class, the Persian translation equivalents of the idioms were provided; and the participants in third and fourth class were taught the idioms using English definition. The selected idioms were given to the participants in



the pre-test to translate into L1 (Persian) three weeks before the experiment to ensure the participants' inexperience of the idioms. After that, the idioms that were known even by one student were crossed out. Then the participants were randomly assigned to the three experimental groups. All the idioms were reviewed in a separate session for each experimental group in English in all classes. In the next session, the participants received two recognition tests in the form of multiple-choice, and the same recognition as well as one production test, in the form of fill-in-the-blanks, were handed out to them three weeks later (first on form and then on meaning). "The data showed that the participants in the picture group outperformed the other two groups; however, the L1 translation group outperformed the L2 group as well." (Fotovatnia, Zahra and Ghazal Khaki, 279) Concerning the positive effect of pictures, it seems that a picture enhanced the learner's understanding of meaning as well as preserving the form of the idiom in the students' memory.

The fashion in which idioms were taught differed from one another in the application of either techniques or methods. Nevertheless, another study about methods made by Omid Tabatabaeid and Firooz Reisi Gahroei investigated the use of movie clips including idioms on the efficiency of learning idioms. The researchers considered it important to choose the idioms by taking into account the "students' level of proficiency, culture, religion, interest, motivation, and practical feasibility" (Tabatabaeid, Omid and Firooz Reisi, 994). For the research, one hundred people were the participants; however, just sixty of them were selected by an Oxford Placement Test. The students' age ranged from 16 to 18 years old. The chosen intermediate students were divided in two groups,



the control one and the experimental one. A pre-test was applied to both groups in order to know if the individuals had previous knowledge about the idioms used in this research. After this step, the control group and the experimental group were under study during two months and two weeks. In this period, the first group was taught thirty idioms by using synonyms and antonyms. The second group, on the other hand, was taught the same thirty idioms by using video clips. When the ten weeks had past, an idiom multiple-choice test was taken by the participants (post-test.) The results showed that “the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on the test...” (Tabatabaeid, Omid and Firooz Reisi, 997). After the post-test, an attitudinal questionnaire was administered in which the sixty students and ten teachers participated. The purpose of this questionnaire was to find out their attitudes at the moment of teaching and learning idioms through movie clips. The overall outcome “showed that the students had quite high positive attitude towards the application of movie clips in teaching new idioms” (Tabatabaeid, Omid and Firooz Reisi, 997). Furthermore, idioms teaching would be more effective if the students had more opportunities to participate in numerous authentic video clips and games in their process of idiom learning. This study also stated that teachers must not avoid teaching idioms.

Another method to teach idioms was carried out in Taiwan. This method consisted on teaching idioms as metaphors by Yi-chen Chen and Huei-ling Lai. They stated that:

Traditional methods to teach idioms focused on memorization, [...]
and these methods fail to notice culture entailments embedded in



conceptual metaphors. Especially for FL learners who share neither common cultural background nor living environment with the target language users, difficulties resulting from transferability between L1 and L2 idioms owing to cultural similarities and differences may be serious.

Their study proposed a teaching method of metaphoric mappings which was implemented in an EFL writing class. For instance, the researchers presented some idioms related to the phenomenon of fire such as “the beginning (spark off), the end (snuff out), the intensity (fan the flame), and the duration (slow burn)” (Chen, Yi-chen and Huei-ling Lai, 15). These idioms could be related to a type of human emotion, in this case, anger. This relation or connection is known as conceptual metaphor. The relation existing between anger and fire in Taiwanese culture should be mentioned. The study was addressed to 19 university students in their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Their level varied between intermediate and high-intermediate, and none of them had English as their major. The class lasted one semester as a selective course offered by the university. As mentioned before, this study focused on the use of idioms in writing, thus the participants dedicated themselves to write essays. At the beginning, the essays were written without mentioning any complex description or comparison between things. Nevertheless, after introducing some idioms through a short article, the participants were asked to identify them and notice how the author used them. The students were asked to redo their essays, and this time they had to add as many idiomatic expressions as possible. The results given were encouraging; however, since this study did not



follow an experimental group strictly, the results could not be generalized. This research paper concluded that language and culture were interrelated, and it provided with “dependable clues in comprehending and learning idiomatic expressions” (Chen, Yi-chen and Huei-ling Lai, 18). Furthermore, not all idiomatic expressions could be interpreted metaphorically what gave problems to this study.

A different study applied by Sayed Mahdi and Saeed Ketabi, perceived that the figurative meaning of idioms is influenced by mental linkages produced by previous knowledge. This study included two groups of participants. The first group consisted of “25 (12 female and 13 male) undergraduate monolingual native English speakers. The other group of participants included 25 (14 female and 11 male) Persian native speakers”. (Mahdi, Sayed and Saeed Ketabi, 798-799) All of the participants in this group were advanced EFL learners. They were chosen based on the application of a Quick Placement Test (QPT). Three steps were included in this study: First, Pre-test: At this stage, 25 English idioms in English were introduced to all participants. “They were instructed to clarify those English phrases which they knew their idiomatic meanings and they were strongly asked to avoid guessing” (Mahdi, Sayed and Saeed Ketabi, 799). In order to continue this research, native speakers had to answer at least 15 out of 25 idioms and non-native speakers had to answer maximum 10 out of 25. Second, in the first session, all participants in both studies were instructed to “take three steps for each idiom: a) read both the idiomatic phrase (and the accompanying literal translation, b) form a mental image based on the literal meaning of the idiomatic phrase, and finally c) describe briefly in the provided



space the first figurative meaning that came to their mind upon reading each English phrase.” (Mahdi, Sayed and Saeed Ketabi, 799) A "study sheet" listing the 25 idioms (in English only) with their phrases' idiomatic meanings (also in English) was provided by the experimenter. Third, in the second session, both groups were again given the same set of instructions and a list of the 25 American English idioms in English. They were asked to read the list of idiomatic phrases carefully and to form and describe mental images based on the literal meanings of each phrase. “The findings of this study confirmed that prior knowledge of figurative meaning of an idiomatic phrase can influence the mental image which is made based on literal meaning of phrases by Persian native speakers and English native speakers.” (Mahdi, Sayed and Saeed Ketabi, 800) Both groups gained prior knowledge through the idiomatic definitions which were given to them after the first session, and the results indicated that the participants' mental images were affected by this knowledge.

Besides the figurative meaning of idioms, a study about the effect of conceptual metaphors on learning idioms was also carried out by Elham Rahmani and Mahmood Hashemian. Seventy Iranian Juniors between 19 and 25 were selected randomly, and they were majoring in English translation. They were classified into two groups by the Oxford Placement Test (the experimental group = 40 and the control group = 30). “The OPT was used to assess the juniors' degree of homogeneity prior to the study.” (Rahmani, Elham and Mahmood Hashemian, 250) Then the pre-test was taken by the participants in the form of an objective test about juniors' idioms, metaphors, and conceptual metaphors knowledge. The experimental group was taught via the conceptual



metaphor instruction and the control group via the traditional instruction. The experiment lasted 16 consecutive weeks in which the course met for 90 minutes, once a week. The post-test, which was similar to the pre-test, was applied after the instruction. In order to see the difference between the pretest and the posttest scores, the scores obtained from them were statistically analyzed. The results showed that conceptual metaphors had significant effect on learning idioms more than that of traditional methods. Also, they showed that:

Conceptual metaphors facilitated learning idioms. The participants who had learned idioms by the conceptual metaphor instruction could keep idioms in their mind better because they were familiar with the literal and metaphorical meaning of the words. Also, the participants who learned idioms by the traditional methods could learn idioms, but they failed to draw the meaning of the idioms because their metaphorical awareness was not raised. (Rahmani, Elham and Mahmood Hashemian, 253)

Based on these studies, it has been found that most of them showed accordance with the fact that idioms are a great source to develop communicative competence. Even though some of the previous studies focused on writing and reading skills, the implications kept a trend toward the importance of idioms to develop the speaking skill. Furthermore, most of these studies recommend teachers not to avoid using idioms in their classes and to look for the best techniques to help students learn these idiomatic expressions in order to develop their communicative competence.



Finally, according to these studies, one may draw teachers' and researchers' attention to idiom learning and teaching in EFL contexts. The more idioms students learn to use, the more language fluency he/she will acquire. Idioms are an inseparable part of a language, and they can make the learning process and communication easier. Teachers must not prevent students from learning idioms since they are an essential part of a language. They should investigate and find out suitable and effective strategies to teach idioms in their classrooms. Teachers need to know the types of idioms that their learners should be made aware of, and then they should find the most effective way for students to internalize those idioms. Once internalized, students can begin using them in a proper way and understanding the language at a deeper level.

2.2.5 Strategies when teaching idioms

Teachers always look for good strategies to teach something new to their students to make the teaching process easier. It does not matter if such topic is easy or difficult to explain, teachers should find out the best strategies to teach that topic, and at the same time, those strategies have to fit students' level and interests. Idioms are not an exception to this statement. Despite their complexity, there are some strategies which can be implemented by teachers when presenting idioms in their classrooms.

Some authors such as Claudia Pesce and Tara Arntsen, who are staff writers of Busy Teacher website, have come up with some strategies to teach idioms based on their experience as teachers. Both of them agree with the idea of presenting idioms in a limited number. Pesce states that it would be appropriate to present idioms in groups of five to eight which belong to specific



categories such as food, giving advice, having problems, love among others. Arntsen, however, points out that idioms should be introduced in groups of three to five due to their complexity and difficulty.

Claudia Pesce, in her short work *How to Teach English Idioms and their Meaning*, discusses some strategies for teaching idioms, and they are the following:

- Present idioms in context rather than in isolation: idioms must not be presented in isolation since learners would only know their meaning and would not understand how and when to use them. Idioms should be taught in context because it helps students understand the situation in which the idiom can be used. It can be a simple conversation in which the meaning of the idiom is clear. For instance, notice the idiom *piece of cake* in the following conversation:

— John: Mary!!! Can you explain to me this math problem? I can't get it. It's so hard for me!!!

— Mary: Sure John. You know math is a *piece of cake* for me. I haven't had trouble with it!

- Implement authentic material: some idioms can be found in different kinds of media such as newspapers, magazines, articles, internet, TV programs, songs, among others. Teachers can take advantage of showing students how idioms are used in real life.

Tara Arntsen, in her short work *5 Must-known Tips for Teaching Idioms*, adds more strategies to this list:

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- Introduce idioms according to the topic the teacher is explaining: when idioms are introduced thematically, students feel more comfortable with them since they are familiar with the vocabulary they are using. Additionally, the used idioms will be part of the lexicon of that topic which will also make students more curious and entertained about the topic.
- Focus on the students' level: idioms should not just be part of the advanced learner's curricula, but they should be taught at early stages; it is the teachers' job to choose which idioms are appropriate for their students. Beginners might encounter difficulty when learning idioms due to their lack of vocabulary and comprehension skills. On the other hand, intermediate students could take advantage of learning idioms due to their knowledge of the English language.
- Make students understand first the literal meaning of each part of that idiom: when presenting idioms, the first thing teachers should do is to make sure their students understand the literal meaning of the components of the idiom. Once this process is done, teachers should explain that idiom as a whole using the simplest words to help their students comprehend and learn more easily.

Jo Budden, a staff writer for Teaching English Website, also suggests other strategies to teach idioms in the classroom:



- Use visual aids and pictures to help learners remember. For example, teachers can draw a face with a zipped mouth that portrays the idiom *my lips are sealed*.
- Ask students if one of the idioms presented has a similar translation in their own language. If so, they will be able to remember these expressions by comparing similarities and differences between the English language and their mother tongue. For instance, the idiom *the black sheep of the family* has a Spanish equivalent, *la oveja negra de la familia*.

Briefly, as it has been said, the aforementioned strategies can be useful at the time of introducing idioms in the classroom. However, some of them are crucial when explaining when and how to use idioms; for instance contextualizing and presenting them thematically. Additionally, teachers should be careful to not overwhelm their students with a high number of idioms at the same time. There is not a specific number of idioms that is considered appropriate to teach at a time, but according to the mentioned authors, the number should range from three to eight per session. Another important aspect that teachers must take into account when teaching idiomatic expressions is their students' level and how the complexity of those phrases fit their students' needs so that they will neither be too easy nor too difficult for them.

Teachers can also incorporate techniques such as drawings, visual aids, and translation to help students remember better the idioms that were taught. Authentic material is also another useful tool that might assist students when



learning idioms since they are presented real life situations where idioms are used.

2.2.6 Incorporating idioms in the teaching process

It has been claimed previously that idioms are complex to understand since most of them hide their meanings. However, this should not make teachers and students feel afraid of idiomatic expressions. It is the teacher's duty to find activities that arise students' interest in idioms and help students feel relaxed in the learning process. As stated by Holmes and Moulton, "students need to do more than study, memorize, listen and repeat idioms" (50). This process of learning is not enough to make idioms stick in students' minds. As reported by Ellis, in order to make the learning of idioms significant, students must have a need for using idiomatic expressions meaningfully (qtd. in Holmes and Moulton 50), and teachers must strive to make this happen.

Authors such as Claudia Pesce, Susan Verner, Holmes and Moulton have suggested some activities that might help students reinforce their idiom-learning process and use.

Claudia Pesce, in her short work "How to Teach English idioms and their meaning," recommends the following idiom-related activities to be incorporated in the classroom:

- Make up conversations using idioms: the purpose of learning idioms is not only to understand them but also to use them effectively. To do this, students will use their imagination to create a conversation or dialogue using the idioms they have learned. Teachers should monitor and check accuracy. To make this activity simpler for students, Holmes and Moulton



recommend starting the task by making up characters that have a problem in a particular situation (53).

- Act out: through this activity, students have the opportunity to practice using idioms and also hear different conversations with these idioms included. For this activity, students stand in front of their classmates and perform their conversations or dialogues.

Susan Verner, in her short works “7 Conversation Based Idiom Activities for ESL Students” and “7 No-Prep Activities for Teaching Idioms,” proposes more activities that might catch the students’ attention:

- Photo finishes: this activity consists of presenting an idiom along with two pictures, one with its literal representation and the other one with its non-literal meaning. The students work in groups to interpret the meanings of those pictures and try to figure out the authentic meaning of the idiom.
- Mixed up idioms: this activity is also called scrambled idioms in which the teacher has to write sentences using idioms, and each one of the words has to be written in cards. Students have to unscramble the sentence and come up with the meaning of the idiom in that sentence.
- Guessing game: on the board, the teacher writes down three or four idioms based on one category such as colors, animals, and food. In groups, students try to guess the meaning of those idioms. Afterward, the teacher gives the meaning of the idioms with a contextualized example.
- Idiom translation: each one of the students writes a conversation using several idioms. Then they exchange it with their classmates who have to



rewrite this conversation by eliminating all the idioms and using other words without changing the meaning of the dialogue.

- Idiom reverse translation: for this activity, students have to choose a composition and rewrite it using idioms. After doing this, they have to exchange their work with their classmates who have to read, identify, and highlight the idioms they find.

In conclusion, it can be stated that it is not only the teachers' responsibility to find actions that arise students' interest but also to create a need for using idioms in real situations. This will help teachers notice if their students are ready to use these idioms properly in a cultural and linguistic way. These activities, like the ones mentioned above, should aim to help students feel comfortable and relaxed, and gave fun creating a positive learning experience.



III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method

This research project was carried out by means of a descriptive approach which aims to collect and describe information in the way it is presented without intending to change it. Thus, the information for this paper was gathered from the internet, published material (books), dictionaries, and TV programs under the criteria of American idioms used in different contexts such as: love, work, description of people's personality, and other contexts corresponding to the categories previously chosen by the researchers. Additionally, the idioms went through a process of analysis with the help of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) taking into account their frequency in use. These frequencies were compared in order to exclude the idioms with less frequency.

Furthermore, a survey, which had qualitative and quantitative features, was applied to obtain the final outcome of the most commonly used idioms. These were compiled together in a booklet with activities to help teach them. This technique was considered qualitative since the answers of the survey were based on the respondents' opinion about the idioms they use. In addition, the survey worked as a quantitative technique because the data from the surveys were analyzed, tabulated, and presented in statistical charts for a better interpretation and understanding.

It is imperative to mention that any research process requires a fulfillment of certain aspects, so it can be considered as a valid and trustworthy process. According to Joppe, quoted in Golafshani's work *Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, validity "determines whether the research truly



measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are” (599).

To assess the trustworthiness of research, Guba established that a good and reliable research process should fulfill the following characteristics: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. (qtd. in Shenton 63-64)

In line with Holloway and Wheeler, credibility “is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings” (qtd. in Anney, 276). To promote credibility in a qualitative study, a researcher must adopt strategies such as: triangulation and random sampling (Anney, 276). Collecting documents, films, videotapes, audio recordings, artifacts, and other “raw” or “slice-of-life” data items is another strategy to increase credibility according to Stringer (85).

Based on these characteristics of qualitative research, it can be said that this project fulfilled this aspect of credibility because the participants of the investigation were taken randomly with the criteria of being native English speakers in his/her twenties and thirties. Furthermore, the collected data went through a three-filter process which was a triangulation procedure that helped gather more reliable information. The evidence of these processes can be seen through different sources such as books, the internet, dictionaries, and TV programs; results gotten from COCA; and surveys.

Transferability is another criterion for good research, which according to Bitsch, Tobin, and Begley, refers “to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other



respondents” (qtd. in Anney, 277). To do this, researchers must do purposive sampling. Therefore, this study is transferable since an essential characteristic of the sample – age – was considered previously so that the information provided would fit the needs of the beneficiaries of the booklet.

Dependability is another condition to be taken into account when carrying out qualitative research, and it refers to the stability of the findings claimed by Bitsch (qtd. in Anney, 278). To make research dependable, an audit trail needs to be done. All the procedures to do proper research were checked and approved by the tutor of this project and the authorities of the English Language and Literature school at Universidad de Cuenca. In addition, since this paper is a requirement in order for the researchers to graduate, it must accomplish some pre-established conditions to be a good research project.

Finally, Baxter and Eyles refer to confirmability as the degree to which the results of a study can be corroborated by other researchers (qtd. in Anney, 279). This research project is confirmable since there is physical evidence from the original surveys that were applied to the participants. This information would be accessible upon request.

In conclusion, as it has been supported by the above evidence, this paper is valid since it accomplishes all the criteria of a descriptive-qualitative research project.

3.2 Human resources: Survey participants’ description

The participants of the survey were native English speakers, who due to different circumstances, were staying in Cuenca, Ecuador. This group was the third and last source to determine the most commonly used idioms.



It is imperative to mention that in order to gather the most updated information that corresponded to the target group's needs (third-term students of conversation classes at Universidad de Cuenca), it was considered important that the age of the participants range from twenty to forty years old. The information provided by this generation was assumed to be relevant since the age group of the participants match that of the target group. This was important due to the phenomenon of the change and increase of idiomatic expressions over the time.

Additionally, for the purpose of obtaining trustworthy information, it was mandatory that the participants were native English speakers since idioms come from their culture and language. In the survey, they selected the most commonly used idioms according to their own opinion and experience.

The number of participants (native English speakers) was eighty; this number was considered a representative sample adequate to obtain the desired data. Moreover, the participants were both male and female, and they were chosen randomly to add objectivity to the application of the surveys. It is necessary to state that this means was not the only filter by which the information went through.

To conclude, it has to be stated that because the participants were native English speakers, it was not necessary to translate the survey into a Spanish version, since they completely master the English language.

3.3 Data gathering techniques

Previously to the collection of the idioms, an interview was carried out in order to obtain information about the teaching of idioms in classes of



Conversation II of the English language and Literature school at Universidad de Cuenca. This information allowed the researchers to start their project.

To get the eight most commonly used idioms for each of the ten categories, three hundred idioms were chosen from the internet, books, dictionaries, and TV programs, under the criteria of American idioms used in the pre-established categories. This process of collection was the first filter used to gather this number of idiomatic expressions. Afterward, this data went through two more filters that helped to narrow it down to obtain the eighty final idioms to be compiled in the booklet. These two filters were: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and a survey taken by eighty native English speakers.

3.3.1 Description of the interview

As a starting point of this project, the teachers Lcdo. Juan José Santillán and Master Corbin Campbell, who were in charge of Conversation II classes from the September 2014 - February 2015 semester at Universidad de Cuenca, were interviewed. This interview was carried out in order to obtain information related to the teaching of idioms in this class. They were face-to-face interviews, and they included open-ended questions. The questions were formulated to learn about the teaching of idioms in their conversation classes and the importance that the interviewees give to the learning of idioms.

The answers and opinions from teachers Santillán and Campbell were considered valuable since they were used when writing the description of the problem of this project.



Finally, the transcriptions of these interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

3.3.2 Description of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was the second source to make a pre-selection of the one hundred and twenty idioms out of three hundred chosen previously.

COCA's home page provides itself a proper and brief description of its creator, what it contains, and how it works; all of which will be summarized in this section.

This corpus was created by Mark Davis, Professor of Linguistics at Brigham Young University, and it is the largest corpus linguistic of English that is freely available. It is important to mention that it is the only large and balanced corpus of American English.

This corpus contains more than 450 million words in text format, and it has been updated consistently since 1990. Additionally, the words are divided among the different sources where they are found which include: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts.

COCA also claims that due to its design, it is probably the only corpus of English that contains the most current, ongoing changes occurring in the English language. Its interface can be used to search for exact words or phrases, lemmas, parts of speech, and any combination of words. These words are contextualized in conversations, passages, and short texts which offer good insight into the meaning and use of a word. Furthermore, searches can be limited by frequency which in turn can be compared with the frequency of other



words, phrases, and grammatical constructions. This frequency is compared by genre, and it includes categories such as spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, movie scripts, and academic texts; and by periods that is a comparison of frequency in use of a word over the time.

Besides the different abovementioned uses, COCA offers additional information in the form of:

- Comparing and contrasting collocates of two related words.
- Determining the difference in meaning and use between these words.
- Finding the frequency and distribution of synonyms, and
- Creating a list of semantically-related words.

In conclusion, COCA has been found to be a useful tool for this research process. Moreover, since the information in COCA is provided in context, it can be said that it is helpful to understand the meaning and use of any word, and in the case of this project, any idiom.

3.3.3 Description of the survey

A template of the survey used for the fieldwork of this research can be found in Appendix # 3.

The beginning of the survey contained a brief description of the purpose of this research, and a short instruction for the survey participants of what they required to do. Additionally, respondents needed to write their age.

The survey also contained one hundred twenty idioms which were previously selected out of three hundred by means of the Corpus of



Contemporary American English (COCA). These one hundred twenty idioms were distributed in groups of twelve for each one of the ten categories.

The categories that were included in the survey were: love, health, school, business, food, work, having problems, giving advice, describing people's personality, and expenses. The idioms incorporated in each category were labeled with letters from "a" to "i" since this feature facilitated the tabulation of the results. Finally, next to each entry there was a check box which helped participants in their selection.

3.4 Methodology applied in the booklet

For the purpose of presenting idioms in the EFL classroom, a booklet was designed with various activities to teach and reinforce students' learning. Most of the activities included in this booklet were based on the communicative approach since the aim of learning idiomatic expressions is to use them in an oral basis.

However, before the learner can use idioms in a communicative way, it is necessary that they know how to use them grammatically, syntactically, and pragmatically. For this reason, some mechanical activities were included in the booklet to familiarize learners with these structures, and to provide practice for them.

The booklet was divided in ten units based on the ten previously selected categories, and each unit contained eight idioms. Some pictures were used as an introductory part of each unit. Learners need to try to interpret what the meaning of that idiom is.



Each set of idioms was contextualized in a dialogue or in a story. These idioms had a subscript number to help students match them with their definitions by guessing them from their contexts.

Then a brief explanation of the correct grammatical form of the idiom was presented so that learners can be sure about how to use them correctly later on.

As stated previously, a mechanical practice is essential to help students learn idioms before using them; for this practice the following activities were included in the booklet:

- Translating dialogue from section B into Standard English
- Correcting mistakes
- Finding missing words
- Matching statements
- Solving a crossword
- Filling in the blanks
- Rewriting sentences into Standard English and vice versa
- Circling the correct idiom
- Crossing out the extra word, and
- Solving a puzzle

After students familiarize with these idioms, they are challenged to use them in a communicative way, and to do so, the next activities were suggested:

- Sharing ideas using idioms
- Answering some questions
- Deciding what to do



- Making up a dialogue and acting it out
- Writing short dialogues
- Giving advice, and
- Describing people's personality.

The chosen activities were based on the books *English Idioms in Use* by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell, and *The Slangman Guide to Street Speak 1 and 2* by David Burke since they were considered suitable for the target learners.



IV. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 First filter: Collecting the three hundred idioms

Previously, it was stated that the collection of the three hundred idioms was by means of different sources such as books, the internet, TV programs, and dictionaries which served as a first filter in the process of determining the eighty most commonly used idioms by native English speakers.

Before starting the collection of the three hundred idioms, ten categories were pre-established based on the content of the books *Let's talk I* and *Let's Talk II* that corresponded to the third-term students of Conversation II classes from Universidad de Cuenca. Six out of the ten categories were selected by taking into account the content of these books, and they are: food, describing people's personality, business, expenses, health, and work. The remaining four categories were chosen by considering the students' interests based on their ages, and they are: love, having problems, giving advice, and school.

The sources from which the three hundred idioms were collected were chosen for the following reasons:

- Books and dictionaries are considered reliable sources since they have to go through a strict process of analysis before being published.
- A TV program is an authentic material that embraces real life situations where idioms are presented; they provide samples in which idioms are used in spoken language.
- The internet is the biggest source of information available for everyone, and the fastest means to look for specific data.



For this collection, the idioms found in the books: *English Idioms in Use*, *American English Idioms*, *In a Pickle*, *Fabulously Funny Idiom Plays*, and *The Slangman Guide to Street Speak* were analyzed one by one to determine if they belonged to the categories that the researchers had established earlier for this project.

Idioms were also found on the online dictionaries: *The Free Dictionary* and *Urban Dictionary*, and the idiom dictionary, *From the Horse's Mouth*.

TV program such as *Friends* was watched to look for idioms. Even though these sources were authentic, the amount of idioms found in them was low since the analysis of these sources takes time and many idioms that were found did not belong to the pre-established categories.

The internet was the largest source for finding idioms since it allowed searching for the ones that belonged to the ten pre-established categories in a faster and more specific way. Furthermore, lists of idioms were found on webpages such as *The Idiom Connection* and *Usingenglish*, which contributed a considerable number of idioms. Most of them were already categorized, and the webpages provided a definition and an example of these idioms. The Webpage *Academia*, on the contrary, offered a list of idioms with their meanings; thus some idioms from this webpage were analyzed to determine if their meanings belonged to any of the ten categories of this project.

YouTube was another source for finding idioms. In this website, idioms were grouped together based on a word that the idiomatic expressions had in common such as colors, parts of the body, animals, among others. These idioms were also analyzed to conclude whether such idiomatic expression



belonged to any of the pre-established categories. The channels, which helped in this study, were *EnglishAnyone*, *American English n' culture with Philochko*, *WatchMojo*, among others. This last channel provided a few idioms that were contextualized on the topic of its videos. The list of the three hundred idioms can be found in Appendix # 2.

The results of how many idioms were obtained from the different sources can be seen in the following table. To better illustrate these results, a chart (Chart # 1) shows, in a percentage format, the information of the table.

Sources	Number of idioms	Percentage
Books	118	39,33%
Internet	139	46,33%
Dictionaries	38	12,67%
TV program	5	1,67%
Total	300	100,00%

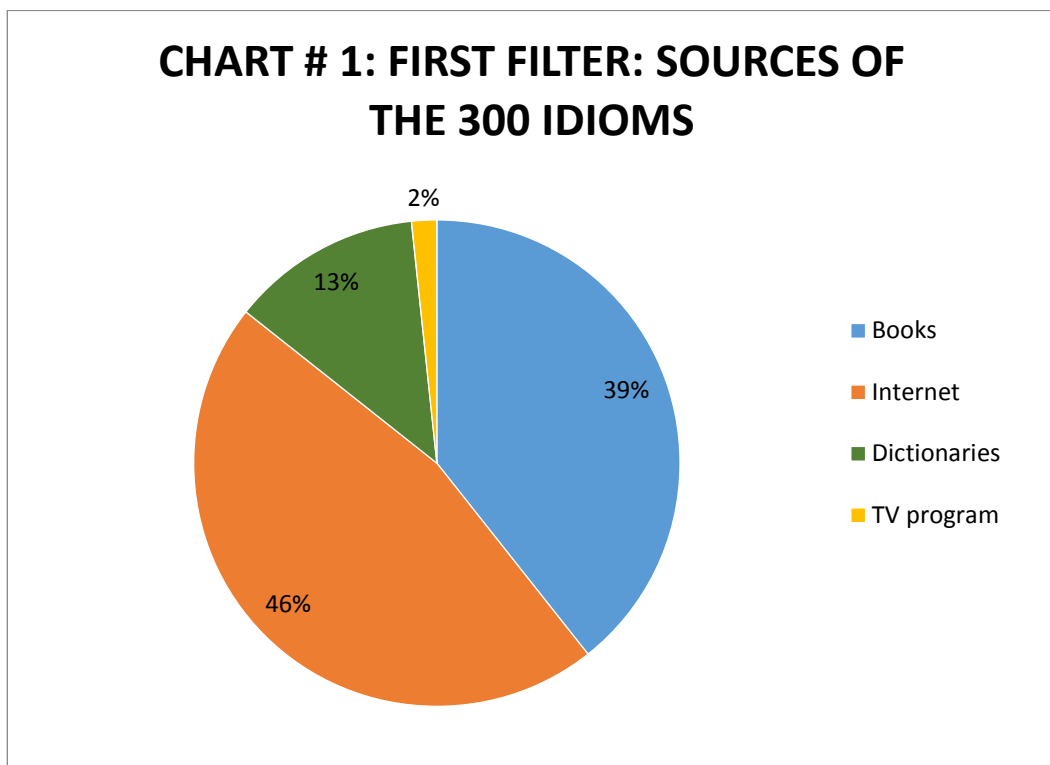




Chart # 1 displays that the largest source of idioms is the internet while the second place is occupied by books. Dictionaries and TV programs are placed in third and fourth place respectively.

4.2 Second Filter: How does Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) work? How was it used in this project?

It has been stated in the previous chapter that COCA was the second filter by which the one hundred twenty idioms were chosen out of the previously selected three hundred. As it is an essential part of the research process, it is imperative to explain, with a few details, the way COCA works.

Before using COCA, a registration is needed to start any research. The registration is free; however, the account has a limited number of fifty queries per twenty-four hours. In order to carry out the process of filtering the three hundred idioms, five dollars were paid to increase the limited number of queries per day to two hundred.

To describe how COCA works, two explanatory videos from the *Youtube* channel, *TheGrammarLab*, were watched. These videos contributed with useful information, in details, that helped the researchers use this tool. This information is as follows:

The interface of COCA consists of three areas. The first one is placed to the left side of the screen where the researcher inputs any word and controls how the data is going to be displayed. The second area is on the top part of the screen and shows the results in a list or chart form. The third part is at the bottom part of the screen where the concordance lines are displayed. See image # 1:



IMAGE # 1: COCA'S INTERFACE

CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH M CAMPOVERDE

450 MILLION WORDS, 1990-2012 [DOWNLOAD ALL 190,000 TEXTS] -- START -- ? history | lists | logout

DISPLAY: LIST CHART KWIC COMPARE

SEARCH STRING: WORD(S) [] COLLOCATES POS LIST

SECTIONS: 1 IGNORE SPOKEN FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER ACADEMIC 2 IGNORE SPOKEN FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER ACADEMIC

SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	LOVE	76085
2	LOVED SECOND AREA	32351
3	LOVES	12437
4	LOVING	3351
	TOTAL	124224

KEYWORD IN CONTEXT DISPLAY: PAGE: << < 1 / 9 > >> **THIRD AREA** SAMPLE: 100 200 500

[?] SAVE LIST CHOOSE LIST [?] CREATE NEW LIST [?]

B C relationship with her father Tom. And happy birthday to North Carolina friend Jean. **Love**s painting vintage windows, h
 B C . MORGAN: The star of " Glee " opens up on her real life and **loves** and reveals Sue Sylvester's secrets. LYNCH: Sometin
 B C . Jim had never married, since he realized early on that his two biggest **loves** -- scotch and the ponies -- would never t
 B C . She huddled us together and balanced our heads against her own. " My **loves**. " she said, " my little angels, farewells
 B C being that his version draws the line at doing something about his hates and his **loves**. Mine requires action for, with, e

SOURCE: COCA

In the first area, a search box is provided for entering queries. There are two options to control how the information is shown: in a list or chart form. See image # 2:

IMAGE # 2: FIRST AREA OF COCA'S INTERFACE

DISPLAY: LIST **CHART** KWIC COMPARE

SEARCH STRING: WORD(S) [] COLLOCATES POS LIST

DISPLAY: **LIST** CHART KWIC COMPARE

SEARCH STRING: WORD(S) [] COLLOCATES POS LIST

SOURCE: COCA

In the second area, the results are presented either in a list or chart form. The list form shows all the possible words or punctuation marks that appear



before or after the searched word together with their raw frequencies, and at the end of this list, there is the total frequency obtained from the results of the query. See image # 3:

The raw frequency is the number of times that a searched word appears in the whole corpus.

IMAGE # 3: SECOND AREA OF COCA'S INTERFACE – LIST FORM

	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	STUDY	144734	
2	STUDIES	79404	
3	STUDIED	19033	
4	STUDYING	14390	
	TOTAL	257561	

SOURCE: COCA

The chart form, on the other hand, is divided into five sections where the text types are found, under the categories of: spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic. The chart form also shows the raw frequency and the frequency per million words which are presented in a statistic chart. The frequency per million words is a relative frequency that comes from multiplying the raw frequency with one million and dividing this new number over the size per section.

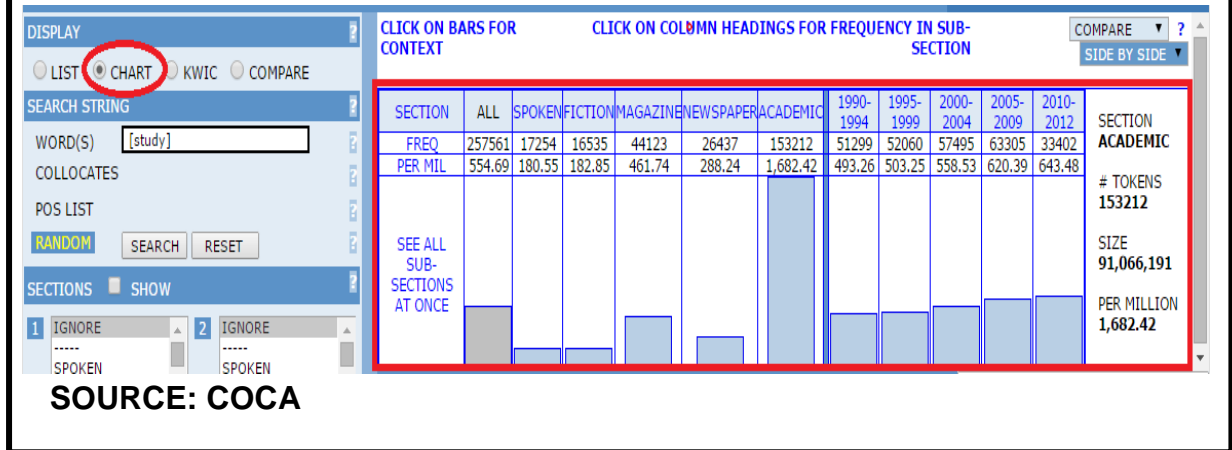
$$\text{Frequency per million words} = \frac{\text{Raw frequency} \times 1,000,000}{\text{Size per section}}$$

COCA also compares the frequencies of the use of a word based on different periods, in this case, years. See image # 4.

Mayra Nataly Campoverde Villavicencio
María José Carpio Cevallos



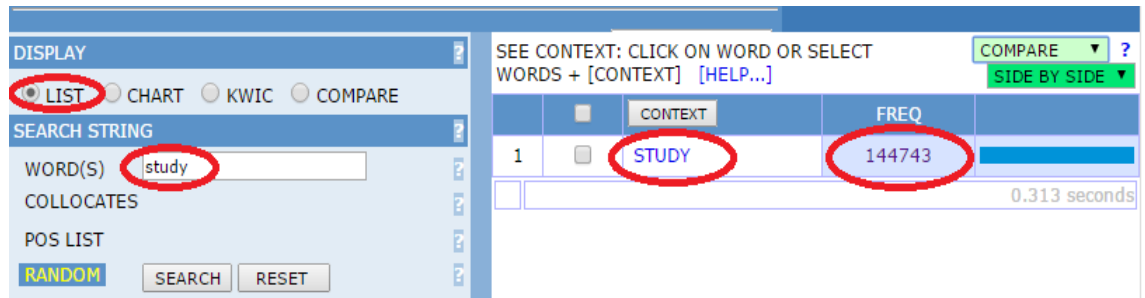
IMAGE # 4: SECOND AREA OF COCA'S INTERFACE – CHART FORM



For the purposes of this study, the total frequency per million was taken into account to analyze the frequency of use of the three hundred selected idioms in order to choose the one hundred twenty idioms with the most frequency.

It is essential to point out that the results may vary depending on how the input is typed in the search box. To better explain this idea, the different ways of entering a query are described below:

- If the word is typed alone, COCA displays, as default, the raw frequency of that word in a list form. See image # 5

IMAGE # 5: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – WORD ALONE

The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- DISPLAY** section: Radio buttons for **LIST** (selected), CHART, KWIC, and COMPARE.
- SEARCH STRING** section: A text input field containing the word "study".
- SEARCH** and **RESET** buttons.
- RESULTS** table:

	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	STUDY	144743	
- Additional controls: "SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]", "COMPARE" dropdown, "SIDE BY SIDE" dropdown, and a timer showing "0.313 seconds".

SOURCE: COCA

- The use of an asterisk in a query allows displaying the results with any word, affix, or punctuation mark that can be found before or after the searched word. In other words, the asterisk can stand in for a word or punctuation mark that goes before or after the main word. If the asterisk is placed next to the searched word without space, the results show all the possible words, affixes, and even punctuation marks along with the word depending on the position of the asterisk. For example, the main word *honest* with an asterisk before (*honest) shows the following results: *dishonest*, *less-than-honest*, *self-honest* among others. See image # 6.

IMAGE # 6: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – ASTERISK PLACED BEFORE A WORD

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The 'DISPLAY' section has 'LIST' selected. The 'SEARCH STRING' section has 'WORD(S)' set to '*honest'. The results table is as follows:

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	HONEST	15162
2	DISHONEST	1106
3	LESS-THAN-HONEST	6
4	HONEST-DISHONEST	4
5	SELF-HONEST	2
6	WELCOME-HONEST	1

SOURCE: COCA

On the other hand, the main word honest with an asterisk after it (honest*) shows the following results: honestly, honesty, honest-to-goodness, among others. See image # 7.

IMAGE # 7: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – ASTERISK PLACED AFTER A WORD

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The 'DISPLAY' section has 'LIST' selected. The 'SEARCH STRING' section has 'WORD(S)' set to 'honest*'. The results table is as follows:

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	HONEST	15162
2	HONESTLY	6119
3	HONESTY	3716
4	HONEST-TO-GOODNESS	97
5	HONEST-TO-GOD	77
6	HONESTIDAD	14

SOURCE: COCA

In contrast, if the asterisk is placed next to a searched word with a space, the results show any word or punctuation mark that goes before or after



the typed word depending again on the location of the asterisk as on image # 8.

IMAGE # 8: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – ASTERISK PLACED AFTER A WORD WITH A SPACE

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The search string is "honest *". The results table is as follows:

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	HONEST ,	2995
2	HONEST .	1851
3	HONEST WITH	1644
4	HONEST AND	1077
5	HONEST ABOUT	627
6	HONEST TO	299

SOURCE: COCA

- If the searched word is typed in square brackets, it means that the results will be lemmatized. In other words, COCA searches for all the possible inflections of that word. For example, the word *[like]* shows the following results: *like*, *likes*, *liked*, and *liking*. See image # 9.

IMAGE # 9: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – WORD IN SQUARE BRACKETS

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The search string is "[like]". The results table is as follows:

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	LIKE	907815
2	LIKED	27902
3	LIKES	16791
4	LIKING	1157
	TOTAL	953665

SOURCE: COCA



As English is a very flexible language, a word can function as a noun or a verb depending on the context. For example, the word *love*, in the sentence, *it was **love** at first sight*, functions as a noun. On the other hand, in the sentence, *I **love** playing video games*, the word *love* functions as a verb.

On the left side of COCA's interface on the Search String area, there is a POS LIST (Parts Of Speech LIST) option which provides tags that limit the function of a word. When it is clicked, a drop down menu appears in which a particular part of speech can be tagged. Thus, there are tags which are general such as [v*] that stands for a verb, [nn*] for a noun, [p*] for pronouns, [app*] for possessives, among others. However, there are other tags which are more specific such as [ppx*] that stands for reflexive pronouns. This is a truly useful tool since it helps limit your searching area and make it more specific. To exemplify this idea, if the researcher wants to know how often the word *love* is used as a verb or as a noun, he/she has to type and tag as follows in images # 10 and 11.

IMAGE # 10: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – WORD WITH VERB TAG [v*]

	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	LOVE	76085	
2	LOVED	32351	
3	LOVES	12437	
4	LOVING	3351	
	TOTAL	124224	

SOURCE: COCA



IMAGE # 11: WAYS OF ENTERING A QUERY – WORD WITH NOUN TAG [nn*]

	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	LOVE	75961
2	LOVES	894
	TOTAL	76855

SOURCE: COCA

For this project, the three hundred preselected idioms went through an analysis in COCA. During this process, the part of speech to which each idiom belonged was taken into account. A considerable alteration was found between the frequencies of an idiom typed with and without tags if the first word of that idiom functioned as a verb, for instance. To exemplify this idea, the idiom *ace* just typed in square brackets *[ace]* gives a raw frequency of 5,747, whereas the same idiom typed in square brackets and tagged as a verb *[ace].[v*]*, gives a raw frequency of 171. To get more reliable data, it was decided that only the idioms that started with a verb would be tagged as verbs. For instance, the idiom *to get hitched* was entered in COCA as follows: *[get].[v*] hitched*. The rest of the idioms were typed as whole phrases just considering the cases of tagging possessive adjectives, object pronouns, and reflexive pronouns.

In the third area of COCA's interface, the concordance lines are presented. To make this happen, the researcher has to click on the word to see the different contexts in which that word is used. In addition, in order to do a

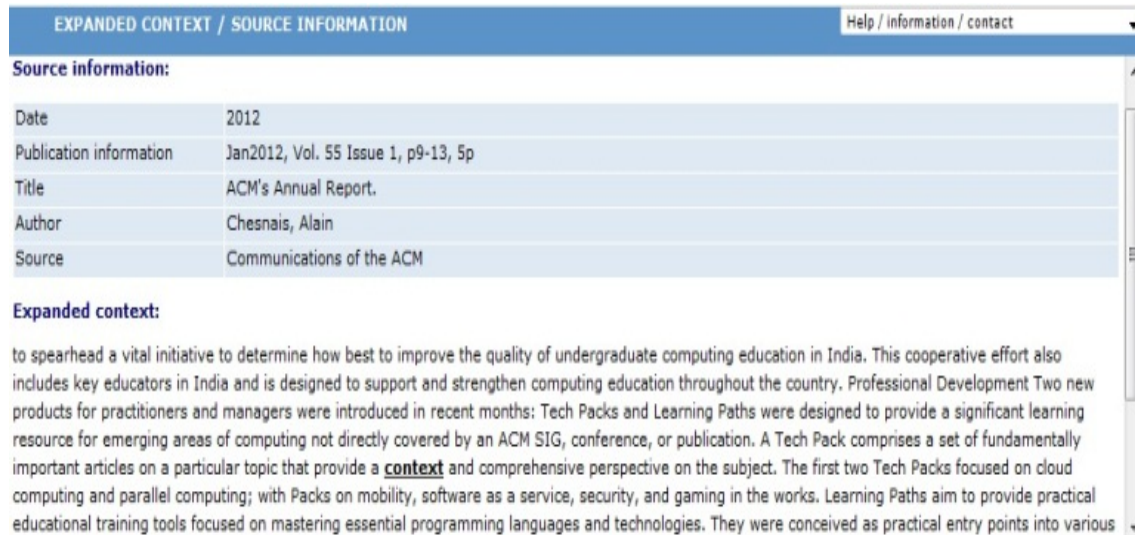


deeper research on the context of a word, the researcher has to click on the *Click for More Context* area at the beginning of each line. See image # 12.

IMAGE # 12: THIRD AREA OF COCA'S INTERFACE

SOURCE: COCA

The expanded context provides examples of the word that is selected in a given/various situations. See image # 13.

IMAGE # 13: THIRD AREA OF COCA'S INTERFACE – EXPANDED CONTEXT

The screenshot displays the 'EXPANDED CONTEXT / SOURCE INFORMATION' section of the COCA interface. It features a blue header bar with the text 'EXPANDED CONTEXT / SOURCE INFORMATION' and a dropdown menu for 'Help / information / contact'. Below the header, there is a 'Source information:' section with a table of metadata:

Date	2012
Publication information	Jan2012, Vol. 55 Issue 1, p9-13, 5p
Title	ACM's Annual Report.
Author	Chesnais, Alain
Source	Communications of the ACM

Below the table is an 'Expanded context:' section containing a paragraph of text. The word 'context' is highlighted in the text. The text describes a cooperative effort to improve undergraduate computing education in India, mentioning 'Tech Packs' and 'Learning Paths'.

SOURCE: COCA

This tool that COCA offers was useful for the present study since it helped analyze the situation or context of the final eighty idioms which were selected by the native English speakers. The dialogues, conversations, or texts, where the idioms were found, were examined to better understand the situation, setting, intentions, meaning, among others.

4.2.1 Selection of one hundred twenty idioms through COCA

It is important to restate that COCA fulfilled two functions: first, it was used as the second filter to establish the most frequent one hundred twenty idioms out of the original three hundred; second, at the moment of designing the booklet, COCA was beneficial for the purpose of explaining the diverse situations or contexts in which an idiom can be used.

After having given a brief explanation about how COCA was used in the last section, it is necessary to describe the procedure carried out in order to get



the one hundred twenty idioms with the highest frequency out of the original three hundred.

Every idiom was entered in COCA twice in order to analyze it in a list as well as a chart form. The list form provided the different inflections that the idiomatic expression could have. Also, depending on the idiom, it showed the possible objects, reflexive pronouns, and possessive adjectives, that certain expressions could contain. For example: the idiom *tighten one's belt* was typed as *[tighten] [app*] belt* in the search box, and the result can be seen on image # 14.

On the other hand, the chart form gave the raw frequency and the frequency per million words which were used to determine the most common one hundred twenty idioms.

IMAGE # 14: POSSIBLE INFLECTIONS AND POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES IN AN IDIOM

DISPLAY		5	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENED THEIR BELT	2	<div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> LIST <input type="radio"/> CHART <input type="radio"/> KWIC <input type="radio"/> COMPARE		6	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENING YOUR BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
SEARCH STRING		7	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENING THEIR BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
WORD(S)	<input type="text" value="[tighten] [app*] belt"/>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENING MY BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
COLLOCATES		9	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENING HER BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
POS LIST	<input type="text" value="poss.ALL"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTENED MY BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>
<input type="button" value="RANDOM"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/> <input type="button" value="RESET"/>		11	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIGHTEN THEIR BELT	1	<div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #0070C0;"></div>

SOURCE: COCA

Although COCA was an essential tool for this project and a great data base, it did not differentiate the context in which a word or phrase is used either literally or nonliterally. However, as explained before, in order to obtain more
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reliable results, the idiom was entered as a whole by tagging one of its components either as a verb, noun, possessive adjective among others, depending on the particular idiom. Consequently, a third filter, a survey taken by native English speakers, was administered. A template of this survey can be found in Appendix # 3.

After comparing the frequencies of the preselected three hundred idioms, the one hundred twenty idioms with highest frequency were chosen. The idioms were established in ten categories to be analyzed by COCA. The method behind the selection of categories (love, health, school, business, food, work, having problems, giving advice, describing people's personality, and expenses.) was explained in section 4.1. As a result, twelve idioms per each category were selected out of a group of thirty idioms.

Below, the list containing the one hundred twenty idioms categorized and filtered through COCA together with their raw frequency and their frequency per million words is presented:

	LOVE	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to break someone's heart	1198	2,58
2	to break up with	778	1,68
3	to have a crush on	358	77
4	love at first sight	311	0,67
5	prince charming	494	1,06
6	to turn someone down	1222	2,63
7	to catch someone's eye	1489	3,21



8	to ask someone out	512	1,1
9	to take one's breath away	373	0,8
10	to have an affair	1601	3,45
11	to cheat on	519	1,12
12	to hit on	287	0,62

	HEALTH	FREQ	PER MIL
1	in good shape	832	1,79
2	to put on weight	178	0,38
3	on a diet	475	1,02
4	back on one's feet	438	0,94
5	to black out	543	1,17
6	Checkup	627	1,35
7	to come down with something	789	1,7
8	to fall ill	434	0,93
9	a clean bill of health	154	0,33
10	on medication	255	0,55
11	to bring someone around	169	0,36
12	out cold	240	0,52

	SCHOOL	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to brainstorm	410	0,88
2	to catch up to	755	1,63



3	Copycat	351	0,76
4	to crank out	450	0,97
5	to drop out of school	717	1,54
6	to flunk out	186	0,4
7	honor roll	424	0,91
8	to play hooky	153	0,33
9	a pop quiz	152	0,33
10	to ace	171	0,37
11	straight A's	144	0,31
12	show of hands	154	0,33

	BUSINESS	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to go belly up	121	0,26
2	belt-tightening	153	0,33
3	ahead of the curve	233	0,5
4	to make a killing	164	0,35
5	on a roll	576	1,24
6	plan B	680	1,46
7	to start from scratch	455	0,98
8	to come a long way	1025	2,21
9	dead in the water	151	0,33
10	hard sell	352	0,76
11	to get down to business	243	0,52



12	a cash cow	184	0,4
----	------------	-----	-----

	FOOD	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to break bread	144	0,31
2	to dine out	339	0,73
3	to grab a bite	75	0,16
4	to melt in one's mouth	97	0,21
5	sweet tooth	228	0,49
6	a lion's share of	493	1,06
7	to wolf down	185	0,4
8	to die for	2245	4,83
9	to cut down	2985	6,43
10	a side of	505	1,09
11	to skip	7413	15,96
12	Leftovers	1371	2,95

	HAVING PROBLEMS	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to ask for trouble	141	0,3
2	back to the wall	146	0,31
3	fish out of water	111	0,24
4	high and dry	208	0,45
5	in hot water	368	0,79
6	in over one's head	198	0,43



7	to pass the buck	112	0,24
8	to go south	718	1,55
9	my bad	237	0,51
10	to be in the same boat	131	0,28
11	to be toast	198	0,43
12	to give someone a hard time	272	0,59

	WORK	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to hang it up	187	0,4
2	asleep at the wheel	166	0,36
3	someone's bread and butter	75	0,16
4	time is money	88	0,19
5	big fish	728	1,57
6	labor of love	254	0,55
7	to put one's head together	99	0,21
8	to call the shots	569	1,23
9	to space out	136	0,29
10	to keep an eye on	2215	4,77
11	coffee break	143	0,31
12	movers and shakers	194	0,42

	GIVING ADVICE	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to cut to the chase	159	0,34



2	to come clean	666	1,43
3	to give someone a hand	343	0,74
4	change of heart	555	1,2
5	to bite one's tongue	289	0,62
6	to face the music	116	0,25
7	to put yourself in someone's shoes	56	0,12
8	to hold someone's horses	60	0,13
9	all ears	122	0,26
10	to turn over a new leaf	67	0,14
11	white lie	107	0,23
12	to clear the air	266	0,57

	DESCRIBING PEOPLE'S PERSONALITY	FREQ	PER MIL
1	Snooty	217	0,47
2	girl next door	195	0,42
3	to be a chicken	126	0,27
4	black sheep	201	0,43
5	pain in the neck	139	0,3
6	happy-go-lucky	191	0,41
7	average joe	204	0,44
8	to be green	1260	2,71
9	fat cat	111	0,24
10	down-to-earth	656	1,41



11	behind the times	124	0,27
12	go-getter	111	0,24

	EXPENSES	FREQ	PER MIL
1	to bring home the bacon	89	0,19
2	dirt cheap	76	0,16
3	to foot the bill	295	0,64
4	for peanuts	56	0,12
5	to make ends meet	930	2
6	bang for the buck	188	0,40
7	to go through the roof	259	0,56
8	money to burn	63	0,14
9	to set someone back	494	1,06
10	pretty penny	83	0,18
11	Cheapskate	105	0,23
12	well off	447	0,96

4.3 Third Filter: Conducting surveys to native English speakers

A third filter, surveys to native English speakers, was carried out in order to triangulate the information which raised the credibility of the results. For this purpose, eighty native English speakers were surveyed. Their age ranged from twenty to forty, and their nationality was American.



While conducting the surveys, the participants were asked to tick eight idioms per each section; however, some of them could not follow this instruction as they were not familiar with some of the idioms listed in the survey.

Once the eighty surveys were gathered, the tabulation process was executed.

4.4 Analysis of the data and presentation of the results of the surveys

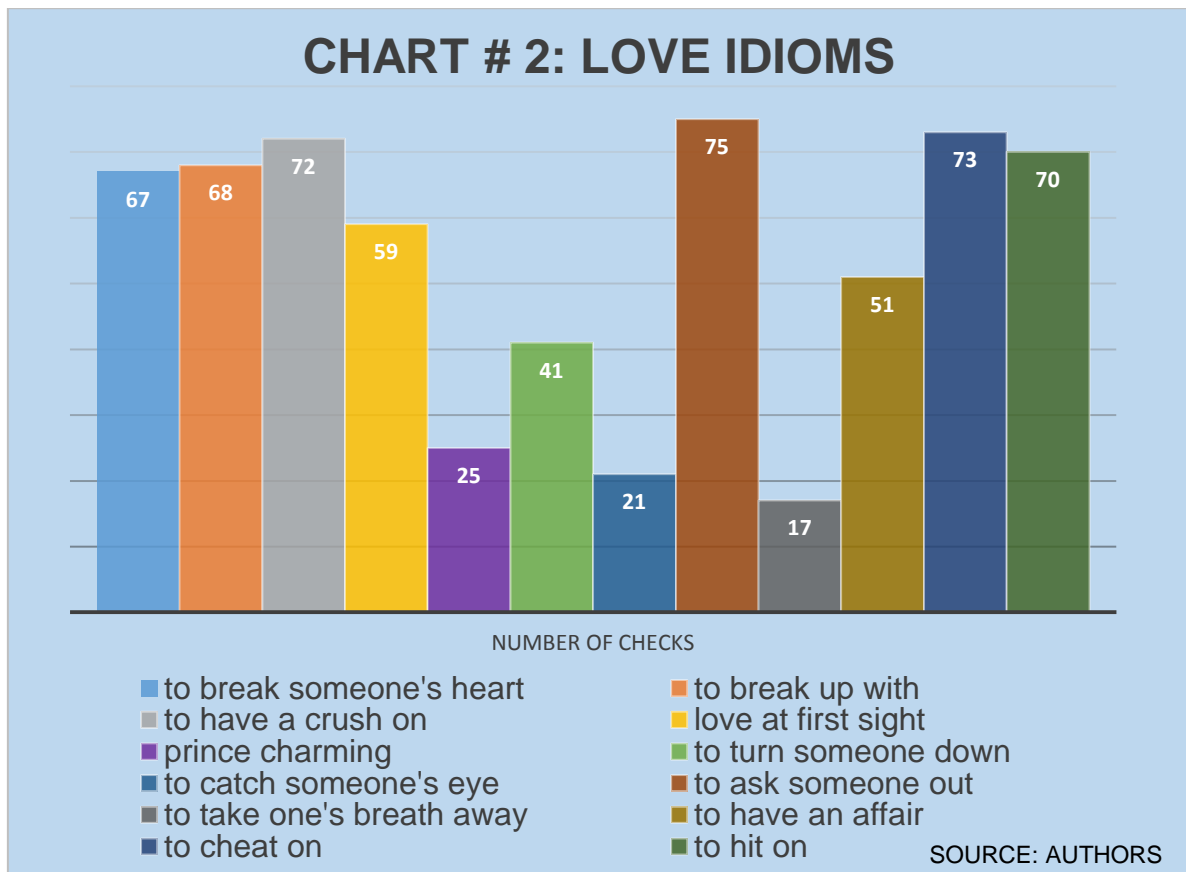
The following tables contain the list of the twelve idioms per category along with their number of checks and the total number of responses. Following, there are statistical charts that better illustrate the results obtained from the surveys. Below, a list of the eight most common idioms for each category is presented in order, from the highest to the lowest number of checks according to the results of the survey:

Category # 1: love

	001L	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to break someone's heart	67
b	to break up with	68
c	to have a crush on	72
d	love at first sight	59
e	prince charming	25
f	to turn someone down	41
g	to catch someone's eye	21
h	to ask someone out	75
i	to take one's breath away	17



j	to have an affair	51
k	to cheat on	73
l	to hit on	70
TOTAL OF RESPONSES		639



The total number of responses for the category love was 639 checks. The results showed that the most frequently used idiom was *to ask someone out*, whereas the least frequently used one was *to take one's breath away*.

Making a comparison between the frequency in use of COCA and the number of votes from the surveys, it was found that the idiom *to have an affair* in COCA was the most frequently used idiom, whereas in the survey the result

did not reflect the same high number. The idiomatic expression *to take one's*

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breath away in both filters, COCA and surveys, revealed low results. In the case of the idiom *to catch someone's eye*, COCA had it as the second most frequently used expression; however, according to the results of the surveys, it did not appear among the idioms with the greatest number of selections. Finally, the nonliteral expression *to hit on* had the lowest result in COCA; however, it was well recognized by the participants in the survey.

The following list shows the eight most frequently used idioms:

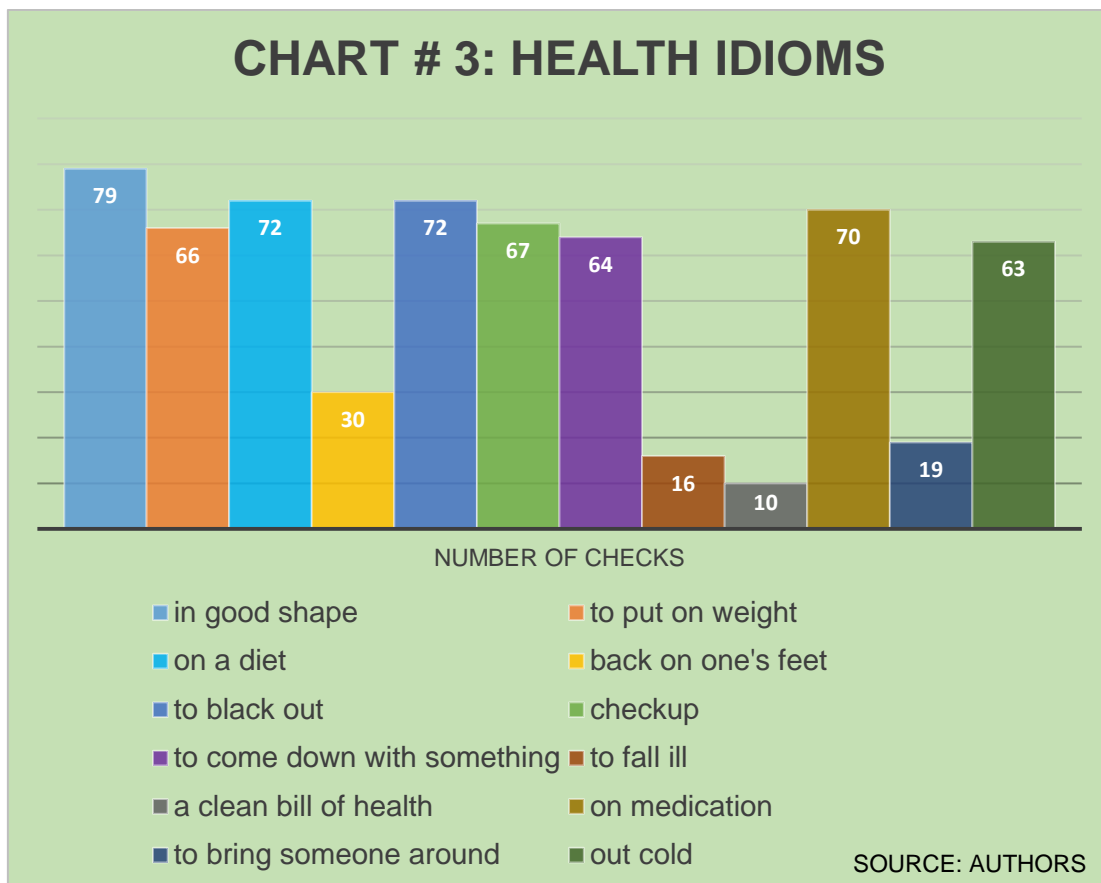
1. To ask someone out
2. To cheat on
3. To have a crush on
4. To hit on
5. To break up with
6. To break someone's heart
7. Love at first sight
8. To have an affair

Category # 2: Health

	002H	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	in good shape	79
b	to put on weight	66
c	on a diet	72
d	back on one's feet	30



e	to black out	72
f	checkup	67
g	to come down with something	64
h	to fall ill	16
i	a clean bill of health	10
j	on medication	70
k	to bring someone around	19
l	out cold	63
	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	628





For the group of health idioms, the total number of responses was 628. The findings showed that the most popular idiom was *in good shape*; in contrast, the idiomatic expression *a clean bill of health* was the lowest one.

Comparing the results from the second and third filter, COCA and the surveys, the idiom *in good shape* had the highest results, whereas the figurative phrase *a clean bill of health* got the lowest results in both filters. Finally, the idiom *to put on weight*, according to COCA, was the second lowest in terms of frequency; nonetheless, it had a good number of checks on the surveys.

The eight most voted idioms from this category are the following:

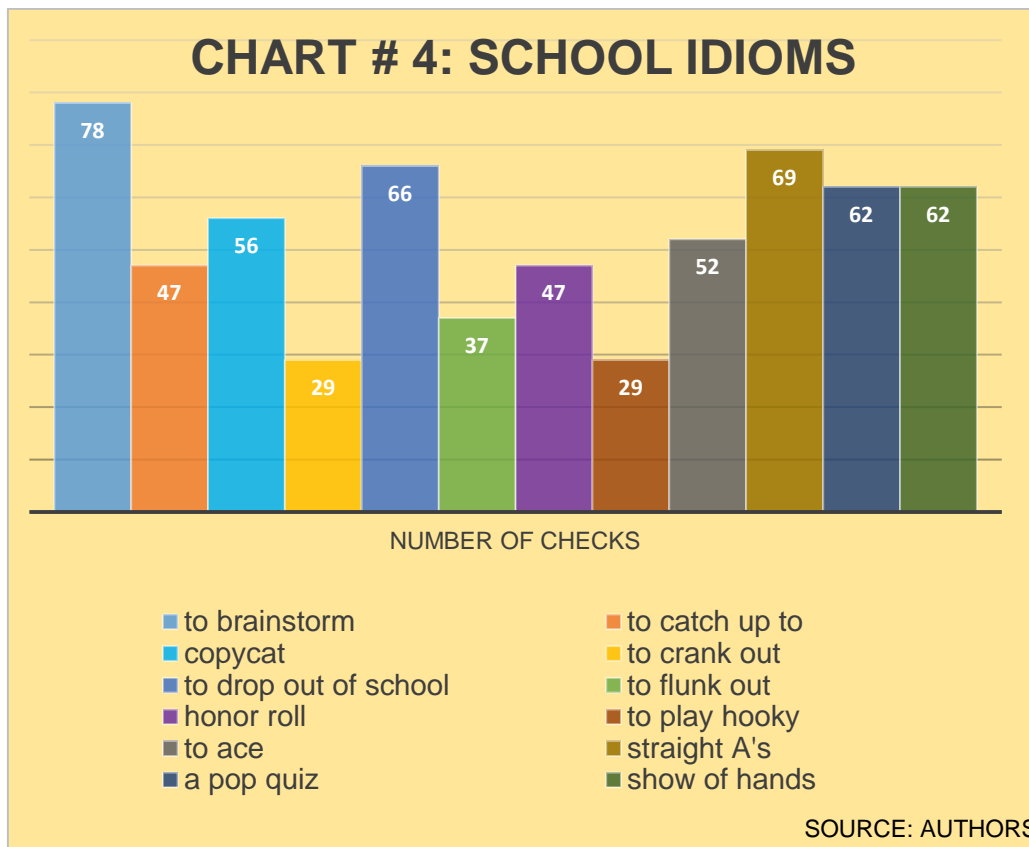
1. in good shape
2. on a diet
3. to black out
4. on medication
5. checkup
6. to put on weight
7. to come down with something
8. out cold

Category # 3: School

	003S	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to brainstorm	78
b	to catch up to	47



c	Copycat	56
d	to crank out	29
e	to drop out of school	66
f	to flunk out	37
g	honor roll	47
h	to play hooky	29
i	to ace	52
j	straight A's	69
k	a pop quiz	62
l	show of hands	62
	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	634



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In this set of school idioms, the total number of answers was 634. The most commonly used idiom was *to brainstorm*, whereas *to crank out* and *to play hooky* were the least popular ones.

Comparing the results retrieved from COCA with the results from the surveys, the idiomatic expression *to play hooky* obtained the lowest results in both filters. Although, the idiom *straight A's* was the least frequently used expression according to COCA, it was the second most popular in the surveys. Similarly, the idiom *to brainstorm* was not very frequent based on the findings from COCA; nonetheless, it was the most recognized idiom in the surveys.

It is necessary to mention that the idioms *to catch up to* and *honor roll* had the same outcome in the survey with 47 checks. This number occupied the eighth place in the list of the eight most popular idioms and caused the researchers to deliberate which one of these two idioms would take the eighth place. In the end, it was decided that the results from COCA would be taken into account to discard one of the two idioms. Therefore, the idiom *to catch up to* with 755 in raw frequency outnumbered *honor roll* with 424 in raw frequency.

The eight most popular idioms from this category are the following:



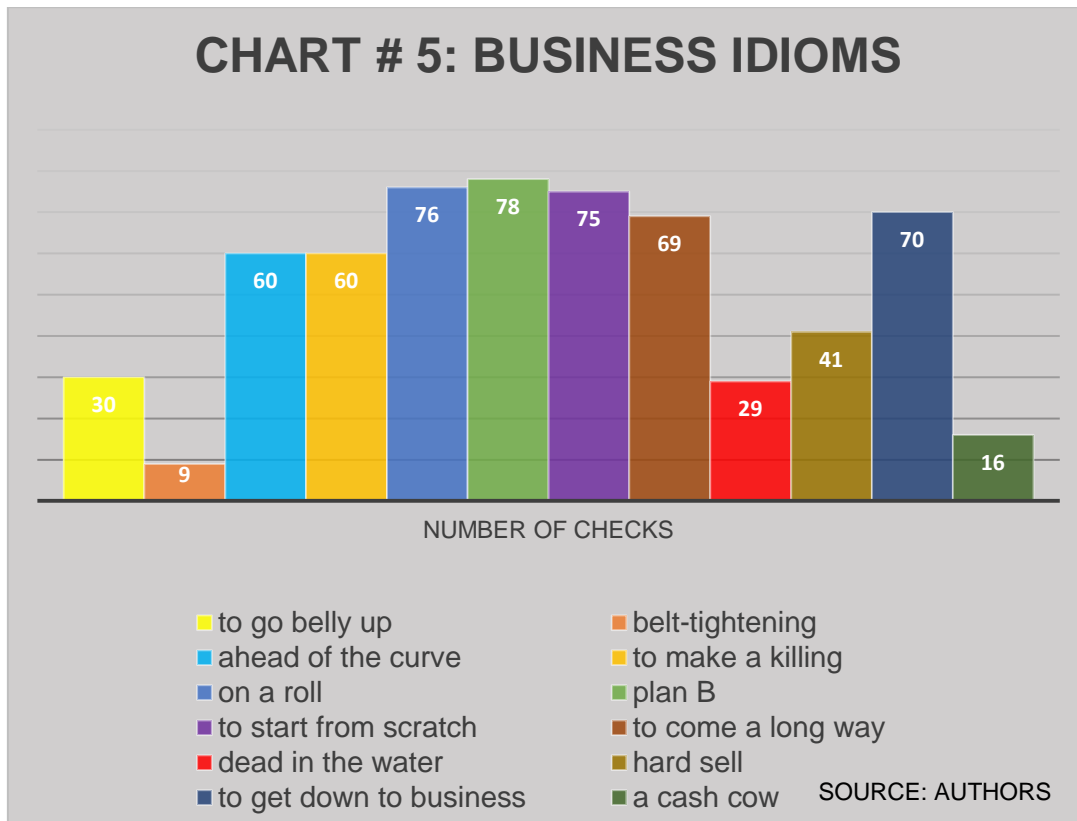
1. To brainstorm
2. Straight A's
3. To drop out of school
4. Pop quiz
5. A show of hands
6. Copycat
7. To ace
8. To catch up to

Category # 4: Business

	004B	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to go belly up	30
b	belt-tightening	9
c	ahead of the curve	60
d	to make a killing	60
e	on a roll	76
f	plan B	78
g	to start from scratch	75
h	to come a long way	69
i	dead in the water	29
j	hard sell	41



k	to get down to business	70
l	a cash cow	16
	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	613



The total number of votes for the category of business idioms was 613. The most widely used idiom was *plan B* while *belt-tightening* was the least common one.

Comparing the results obtained from the two filters, COCA and the surveys, some similarities and contrasts were found. For instance, *Plan B* not only in COCA but also in the surveys obtained high numbers; and *belt-tightening* got low numbers in both filters. On the other hand, the idiom *to make*



a *killing* had a low frequency in COCA, but it had a considerable number of votes in the surveys.

Following, the list of the eight most popular idioms is presented:

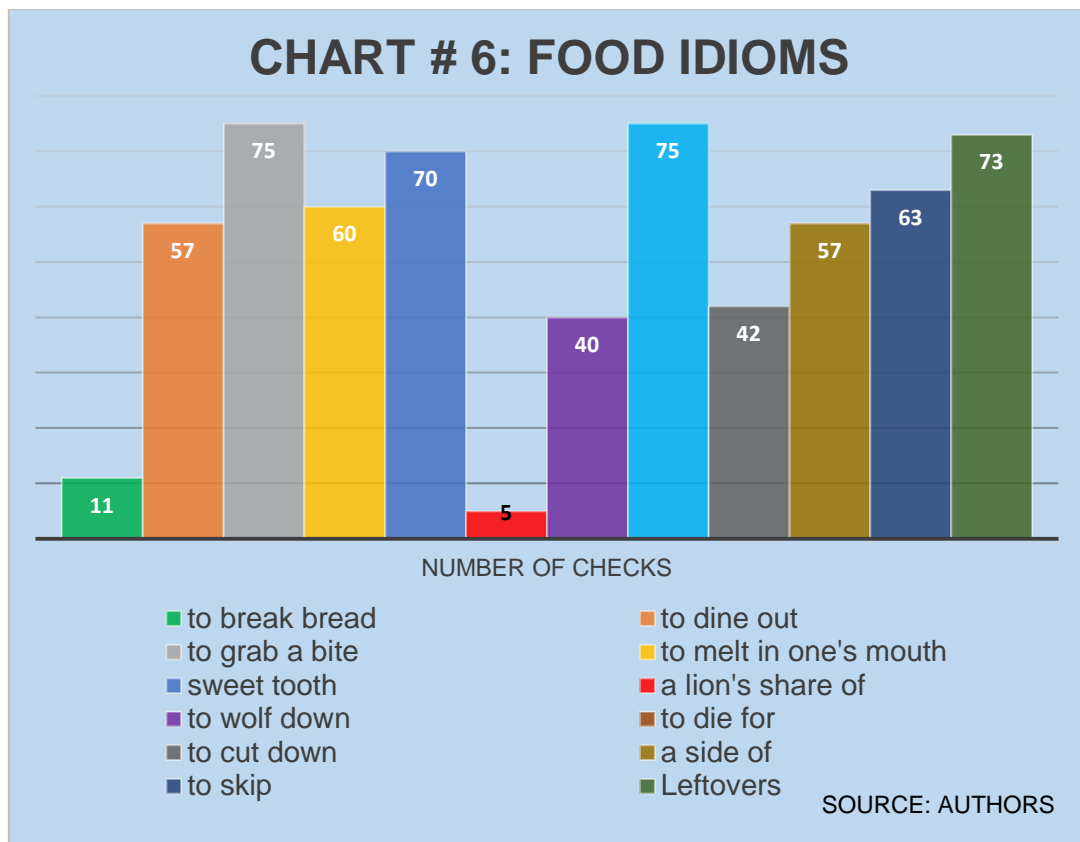
1. Plan B
2. On a roll
3. To start from scratch
4. To get down to business
5. To come a long way
6. Ahead of the curve
7. To make a killing
8. Hard sell

Category # 5: Food

	005F	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to break bread	11
b	to dine out	57
c	to grab a bite	75
d	to melt in one's mouth	60
e	sweet tooth	70
f	a lion's share of	5
g	to wolf down	40
h	to die for	75



i	to cut down	42
j	a side of	57
k	to skip	63
l	Leftovers	73
TOTAL OF RESPONSES		628



Related to the group of food idioms, the total number of responses was 628. The expression *to grab a bite* and *to die for* were the most frequently used ones both with 75 votes, and the idiom *a lion's share of* received the lowest result.

Considering the outcomes from both COCA and the surveys, the idiom *to die for* had good numbers in both filters; in contrast, the idiomatic expression *to*



break bread was one of the idioms which got the lowest results. *To cut down* obtained a high number in COCA, but in the surveys its number did not allow it to be in the list of the eight most popular idioms. The idiom *to grab a bite* was the opposite since it got lower results in COCA, but it was one of the most well-known idioms in the surveys.

The list of the eight most popular food idioms is:

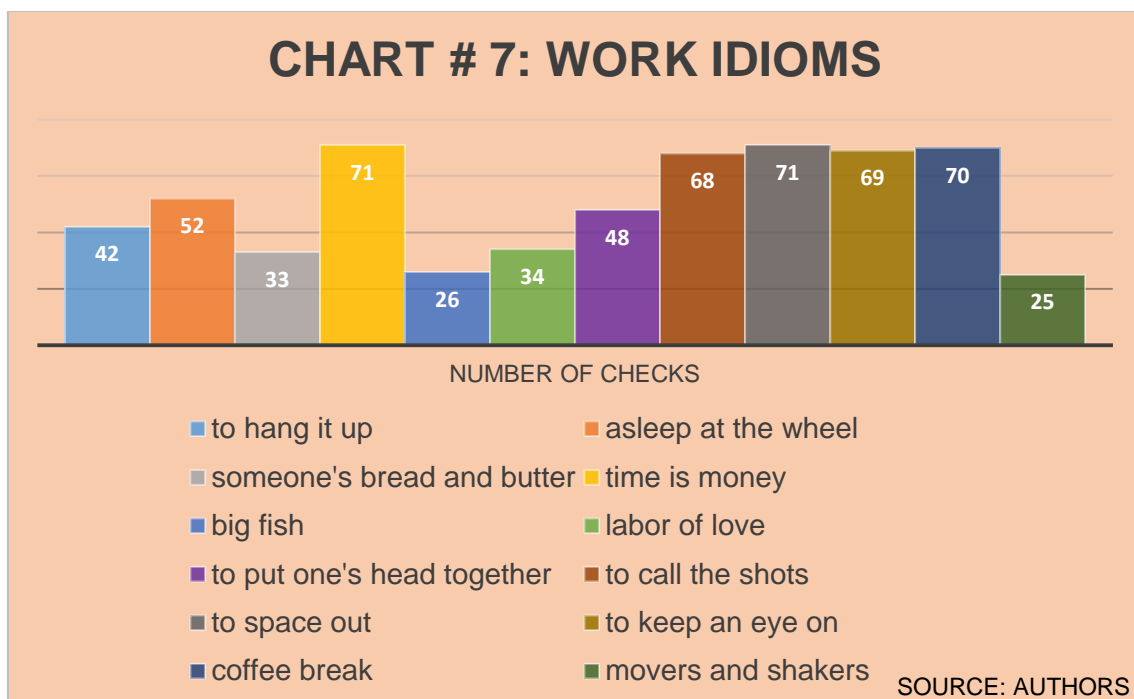
1. To grab a bite
2. To die for
3. Leftovers
4. Sweet tooth
5. To skip
6. To melt's in one's mouth
7. To dine out
8. A side of

Category # 6: Work

	006W	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to hang it up	42
b	asleep at the wheel	52
c	someone's bread and butter	33
d	time is money	71
e	big fish	26



f	labor of love	34
g	to put one's head together	48
h	to call the shots	68
i	to space out	71
j	to keep an eye on	69
k	coffee break	70
l	movers and shakers	25
	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	609



In the category work, the total number of answers was 609. The findings showed that the idioms *time is money* and *to space out* were the most popular ones both with 71 checks, and the lowest one was *movers and shakers*.

A comparison made between the two filters, COCA and the surveys, showed that the idiom *to keep an eye on* had good outcomes in both filters, and

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the idiomatic expression *someone's bread and butter* had low results in both filters as well. On the contrary, *big fish*, according to COCA, was the second most frequent idiom, but in the results of the surveys, its number of checks was not high enough to get into the list of the eight most popular idioms.

Accordingly, the list of the eight most common idioms is:

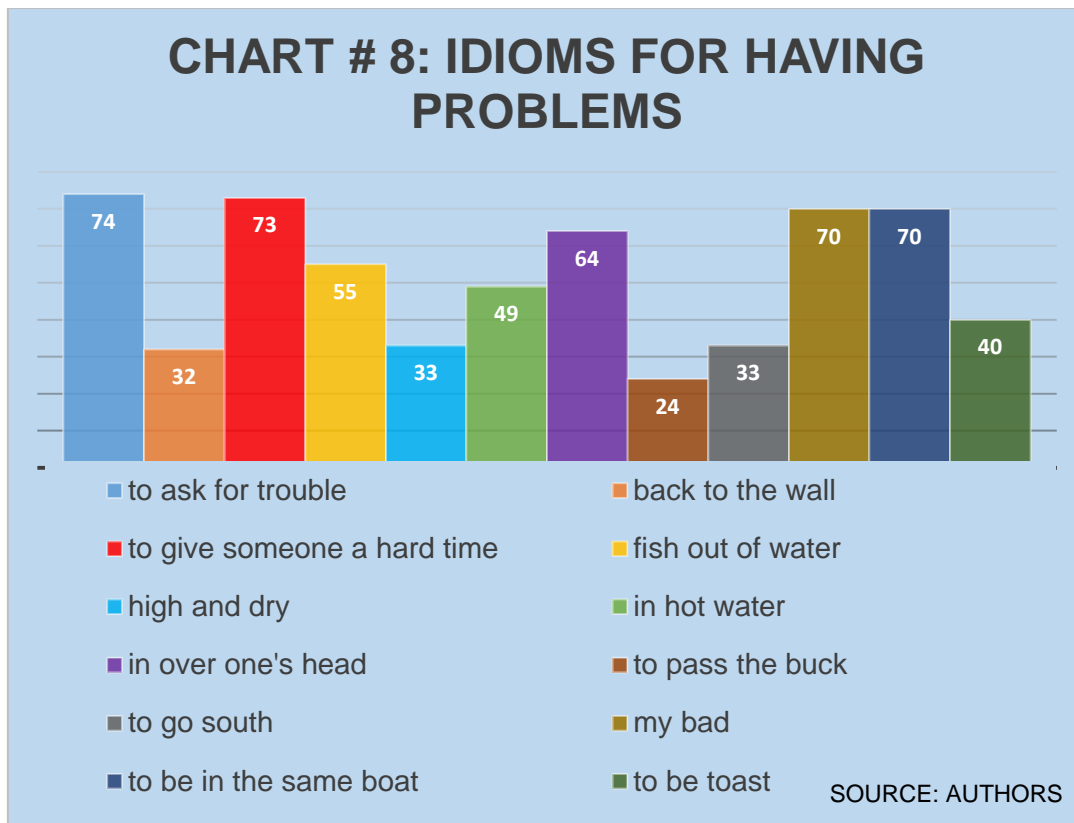
1. Time is money
2. To space out
3. Coffee break
4. To keep an eye on
5. To call the shots
6. Asleep at the wheel
7. To put one's head together
8. To hang it up

Category # 7: Having problems

	007HP	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to ask for trouble	74
b	back to the wall	32
c	to give someone a hard time	73
d	fish out of water	55
e	high and dry	33
f	in hot water	49



g	in over one's head	64
h	to pass the buck	24
i	to go south	33
j	my bad	70
k	to be in the same boat	70
l	to be toast	40
TOTAL OF RESPONSES		617



The total number of answers for the set of idioms about having problems was 617. The results showed that the nonliteral phrase *to ask for trouble* was the most selected one, and the idiom with the lowest number was *to pass the buck*.

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Relating the results from COCA and the surveys, it was found that the idiom *to pass the buck* got the lowest number in both aforementioned filters. *To go south*, in COCA, obtained the highest result, whereas in the surveys, it did not have the same results which kept it from being part of the final list of idioms. On the other hand, the idiomatic expression *to ask for trouble* had a low number in COCA, but in the surveys, it was the most highly chosen.

The eight most commonly used idioms are presented in the following list:

1. To ask for trouble
2. To give someone a hard time
3. My bad
4. To be in the same boat
5. In over one's head
6. Fish out of water
7. in hot water
8. to be toast

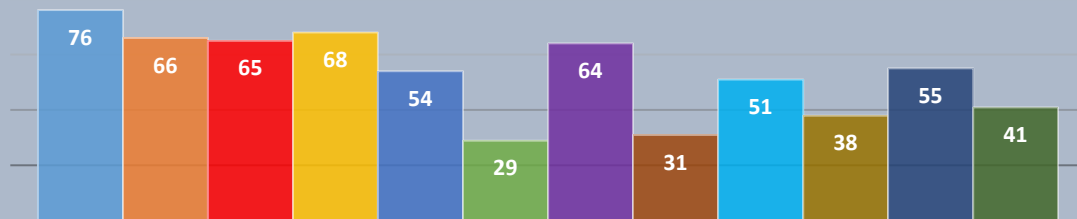
Category # 8 Giving advice

	008GA	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to cut to the chase	76
b	to come clean	66
c	to give someone a hand	65
d	change of heart	68



e	to bite one's tongue	54
f	to face the music	29
g	to put yourself in someone's shoes	64
h	to hold someone's horses	31
i	all ears	51
j	to turn over a new leaf	38
k	white lie	55
l	to clear the air	41
TOTAL OF RESPONSES		638

CHART # 9: IDIOMS FOR GIVING ADVICE



NUMBER OF CHECKS

- to cut to the chase
- to come clean
- to give someone a hand
- change of heart
- to bite one's tongue
- to face the music
- to put yourself in someone's shoes
- to hold someone's horses
- all ears
- to turn over a new leaf
- white lie
- to clear the air

SOURCE: AUTHORS



The total number of votes for the category of idioms for giving advice was 638. The findings showed that the idiom *to cut to the chase was the most popular one*; in contrast, *face the music* was the least popular.

Associating the data obtained from the filters COCA and the surveys, it could be stated that the idiom *to hold someone's horses* was not well-recognized by both filters. On the contrary, *change of heart* was one of the idioms with a high number in COCA and in the surveys. It is worth noting, however, that while the expression *to put yourself in one's shoes* got the lowest result in COCA, it had a good number of checks from the surveys.

Next, the final list containing the eight most widely used idioms is:

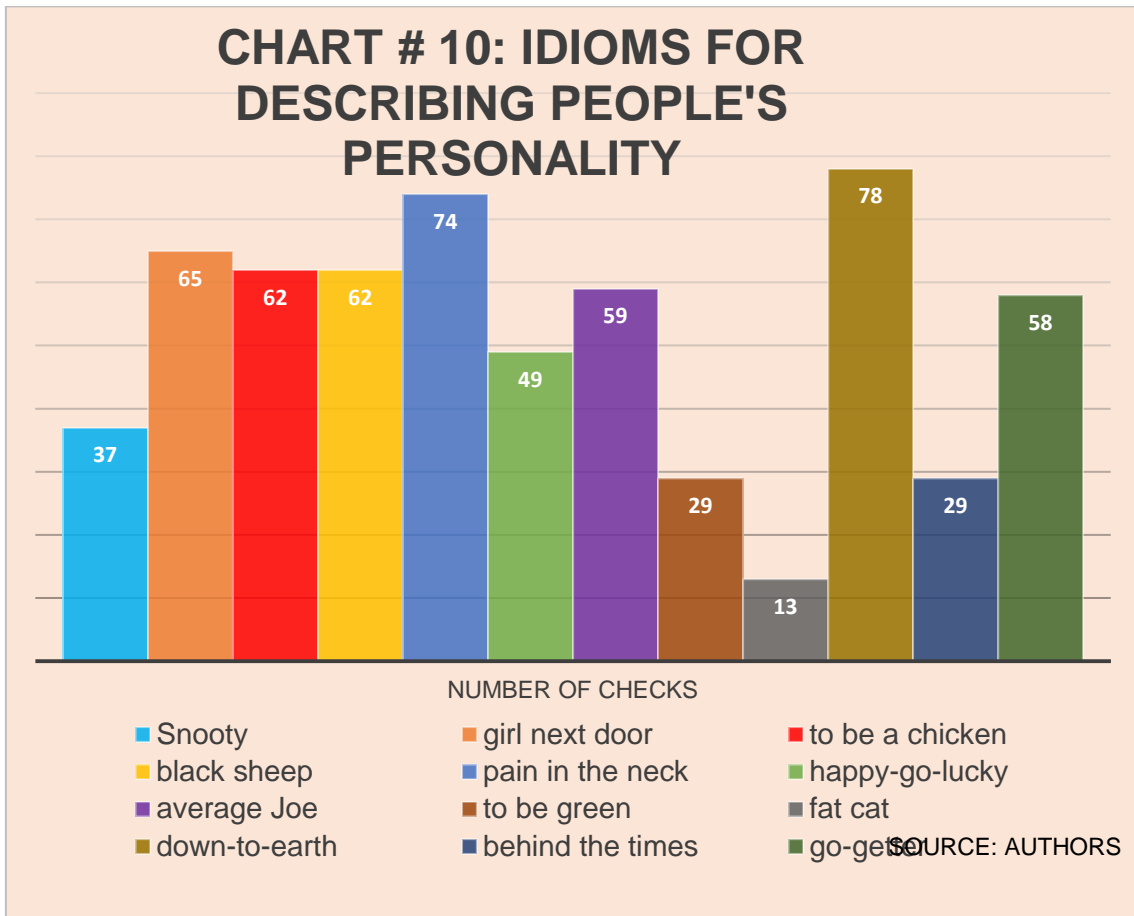
1. To cut to the chase
2. Change of heart
3. To come clean
4. To give someone a hard time
5. To put yourself in someone's shoes
6. White lie
7. To bite one's tongue
8. All ears

Category # 9: Describing people's personality

	009DP	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	Snooty	37



b	girl next door	65
c	to be a chicken	62
d	black sheep	62
e	pain in the neck	74
f	happy-go-lucky	49
g	average Joe	59
h	to be green	29
i	fat cat	13
j	down-to-earth	78
k	behind the times	29
l	go-getter	58
TOTAL OF RESPONSES		615



The total number of selections for the category of idioms for describing people's personality was 615. The outcome showed that the idiom *down-to-earth* was considered the most commonly used idiom, while *fat cat* was the least popular one.

In line with the results of COCA and the surveys, it was found that the nonliteral expression *fat cat* obtained the lowest results in both filters. The idiom *down-to-earth*, however, had very high results in COCA along with the surveys. Furthermore, *to be green* had a good number in COCA, but according to the participants' answers, it was not a popular idiom.

The final list contains the eight most commonly used idioms:



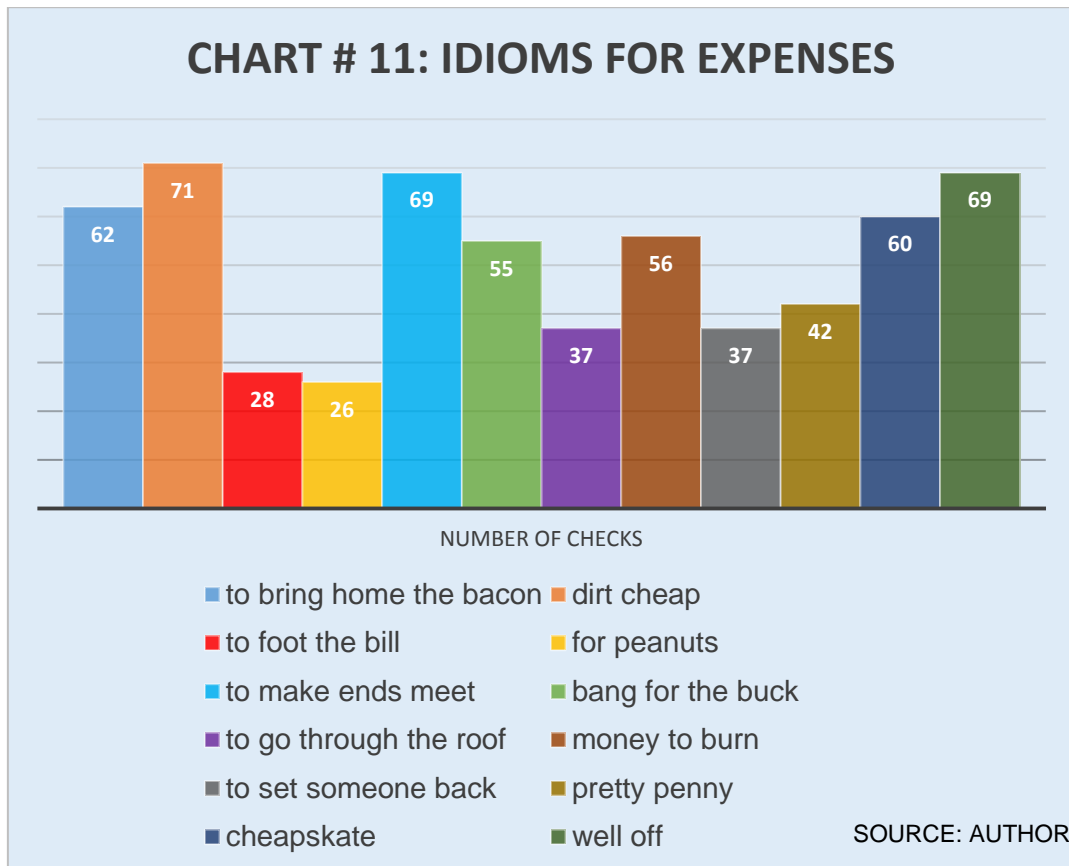
1. Down-to-earth
2. Pain in the neck
3. Girl next door
4. To be a chicken
5. Black sheep
6. Average Joe
7. Go-getter
8. Happy-go-lucky

Category # 10: Expenses

	010E	NUMBER OF CHECKS
a	to bring home the bacon	62
b	dirt cheap	71
c	to foot the bill	28
d	for peanuts	26
e	to make ends meet	69
f	bang for the buck	55
g	to go through the roof	37
h	money to burn	56
i	to set someone back	37
j	pretty penny	42



k	cheapskate	60
l	well off	69
	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	612



The total number of votes given to the idioms in the category for expenses was 612. The findings showed that the most popular idiom was *dirt cheap*, and the least popular was *for peanuts*.

Taking into account the results retrieved from COCA and the surveys, it can be deduced that the idiom *for peanuts* is no longer wildly used by American people since it had the lowest results in both filters. The idiom *make ends meet* got the highest place in COCA and second place in the surveys together with the idiom *well off* both with 69 votes. Nonetheless, there was a contrasting

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result with the idiom *dirt cheap* since it got the highest number of checks in the surveys, but it had one of the lowest numbers in COCA.

Subsequent, it is the final list of the eight most widespread idioms:

1. Dirt cheap
2. To make ends meet
3. Well off
4. To bring home the bacon
5. Cheapskate
6. Money to burn
7. Bang for the buck
8. Pretty penny

As previously mentioned, the surveys, as the third filter, triangulated the data which increased the credibility of the results. According to these results, the categories, whose idioms obtained more checks, are love with 639 checks out of 640, followed by giving advice with 638 checks, and school with 634 checks. Additionally, the participation of the native English speakers was of great importance since with their help, the eighty final idioms were attained, and consequently the base to develop the booklet, the main purpose of this project.



V. DESIGN OF THE BOOKLET

As it has been stated from the beginning, the purpose of this study is the design of a booklet. After having gathered the eighty most popular idioms, the design of the booklet was carried out.

It is necessary to state that the books: *English in Use* and *The Slangman Guide to Street Speak 1* and *2* have been used as a guide for the selection of the activities that are applied in the researchers' booklet.

The language used in the booklet is informal. There are contractions, interjections, and short forms of words such as "gonna," "wanna," "don't" among others. Furthermore, the level of the students' knowledge was taken into consideration when developing the content of the booklet since its objective is not to focus on other uses of the language but rather on teaching idioms. Thus, students will not be centered on other aspects but on idioms themselves.

The booklet contains activities that make students practice with idioms not only in a mechanical way but also in a meaningful way. Every unit follows a same format having six kinds of activities which are:

- A. Let's warm up
- B. Let's put 'em in scene
- C. Let's focus
- D. Let's practice
- E. Let's use 'em in context
- F. Now it's your turn.



The “Let’s warm up” activity, section A, consists of making students familiarize with the new group of idioms for each category. The essence of this activity is to try to guess the meaning of the idioms by looking at presented pictures and reading statements in context. The warm-up activities vary in each unit. These activities are: Numbering the pictures based on the statements, guessing whether the given definitions are true or false, underlining the correct meaning of the idiom, choosing the correct idiom, checking the correct meaning of the idiom, and matching the idioms with their meaning.

In section B. “Let’s put ’em in scene,” the idioms are contextualized in a dialogue or in a story. In some cases, the idioms are divided in two scenes to better contextualize them. In these conversations or stories, the idiomatic expressions are in bold to highlight them. Furthermore, at the end of each one of the idioms, there is a number which function as a reference to the meaning of that idiom. These definitions are presented in a box below the conversations.

In section C, “Let’s focus,” the grammatical function of the idioms is briefly explained together with some examples taken from the section B of the booklet. Additionally, extra examples are presented to better illustrate the function of the idiom in context.

In section D, “Let’s practice,” two mechanical activities are suggested. In these activities, students will practice the use of the idioms by doing the following kind of activities: translating dialogue from section B into Standard English, correcting mistakes, finding missing words, matching statements, solving a crossword, filling in the blanks, rewriting sentences into Standard



English and vice versa, circling the correct idiom, crossing out the extra word, and solving a puzzle.

In section E “Let’s use ’em in context,” an activity is suggested in which students are more involved with the context of the idioms. Students will focus on the situations and on the idioms themselves. Sometimes, learners will have the opportunity to practice idioms orally. The activities for this section are: deciding if the idiom makes sense in the context; I know the answer, but which is the question; student A asks questions, and student B answers using idioms; deciding if the idiom is rightly or wrongly used; completing the story with idioms; and deciding if people are telling the truth or lying.

In section F, “Now, it’s your turn,” students will use idioms freely with photos and situations as stimuli to produce the language. The activities for this section include: sharing ideas using idioms, answering some questions, deciding what to do, making up a dialogue and acting it out, writing short dialogues, giving advice, and describing people’s personality.

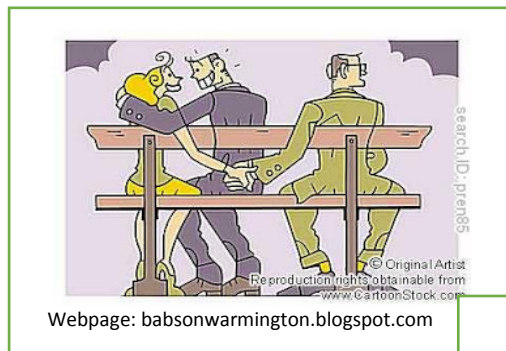
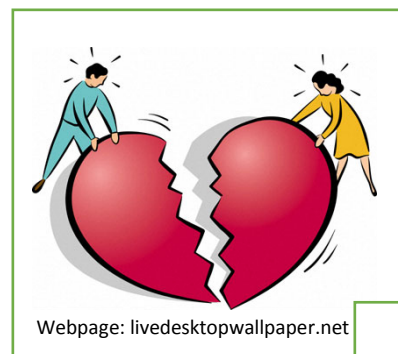
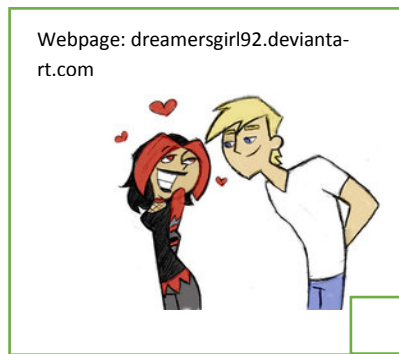
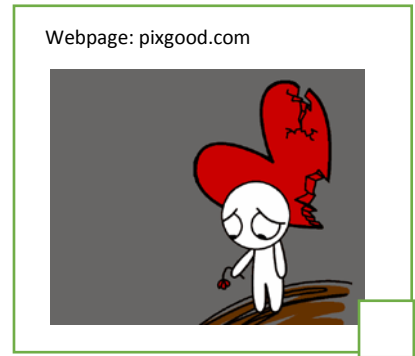
At the end of the booklet, there is an answer key where the teacher can consult the right answers of the activities if he/she has doubts.



UNIT #1: IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!!! LOVE IDIOMS

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences below them. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess their meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the statements.



1. He always winks at me. I think he is **hitting on** me.
2. When I saw her on the street, I immediately fell in love. It was a **love at first sight**.



3. Going to the movies is a must on first dates. I want to **ask her out** to the movies.
4. We decided to **break up** because we were always arguing.
5. I found out my husband was **having an affair** with his secretary.
6. I can't stop thinking about my neighbor. I think I **have a crush on** him.
7. Mary told me that she is **cheating on** her boyfriend with her friend.
8. She **broke my heart** when she told me that she no longer loved me.

B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

In the following dialogue, you will find the idioms that were presented in the Warm-up activity. Read it and try to understand the conversation based on the definition of the idioms below.

Ann and Rose are talking about their sentimental lives.

Ann: Hi, Rose. How are you doing?

Rose: Hi! It's been ages since the last time we saw each other. I'm doing fine, and you?

Ann: You know, I'm great!!! I just had lunch with John.

Rose: Oh! John? The guy you have **had a crush on**₁ since we entered college?

Ann: Yeah, him. Actually, he **asked me out**₂ last weekend.

Rose: Wow!!! Congrats! I guess **love at first sight**₃ really works! LOL

Ann: Well, I wanted him to notice me, so I decided to **hit on**₄ him.

Rose: I'm happy for you. I know how much you liked him from the very beginning.

Ann: And what about you? How is Andrew?

Rose: Uhm, I don't know. I haven't seen him for months.

Ann: What??? What happened?

Rose: I found out he was **cheating on**₅ me. It was really hard...

Ann: No way! He loved you so much! Are you sure he was cheating on you?

Rose: Pretty sure he was **having an affair**₆ because his mistress came to my workplace. It **broke my heart**₇.

Ann: What? Did she do that??? And what did you do?

Rose: I was in shock! I did nothing, but later I decided to **break up with**₈ him.



1. To be very attracted to someone in a romantic way.
2. To invite someone on a date.
3. A strong feeling when you see someone for the first time.
4. To flirt
5. To be unfaithful
6. To secretly have sex with someone who is not your partner.
7. To feel very disappointed.
8. To finish a relationship.

C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	BRIEF EXPLANATION
To hit on	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. An object (a noun or an object pronoun) is needed after the preposition "on." For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I wanted him to notice me, so I decided to hit on him. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mike was hitting on me at the party, and I felt flattered. - Daniel hit on Sabrina, but she didn't realize it. - Men usually hit on cute girls.
Love at first sight	<p>This phrase is used as a noun. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I guess love at first sight really works! <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When I saw my new coworker, it <u>was</u> love at first sight.
To ask someone out	<p>It is a phrasal verb. An object (a noun or object pronoun) is placed between the verb and its preposition. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actually, he asked me out on last weekend. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did he ask you out? I think he likes you. - I don't usually ask guys out, but you are an exception.
	<p>This expression is used as a verb. The preposition "with" is optional if you want to specify the person you broke up with. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I did nothing, but later I decided to



To break up (with)	<p>break up <u>with him</u>.</p> <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I spent too much time at work, and my boyfriend always complained. So I broke up <u>with him</u>.- We realized we no longer loved each other, so we decided to break up.
To have an affair	<p>It functions as a verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pretty sure he was having an affair because his mistress came to my workplace. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bill Clinton had an affair with Monica Lewinsky. It was a scandal!!
To have a crush on	<p>This phrase functions as a verb. Usually, an object (a noun or object pronoun) is needed after the preposition "on." Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- John? <u>The guy</u> you have had a crush on since we entered college? <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Teenagers usually have a crush on <u>famous singers</u>.- When I was a child, I had a crush on <u>my English teacher</u>.
To cheat on	<p>It is used as a verb. An object (a noun or object pronoun) is always placed after the preposition "on." For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He disappointed me because he was cheating on <u>me</u>. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The woman confessed that she cheated on <u>her husband</u>.- My boyfriend promised me to never cheat on <u>me</u>.
To break someone's heart	<p>This expression is used as a verb. A possessive adjective or a genitive is needed between "break" and "heart." For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pretty sure he was having an affair because his mistress came to my workplace. It broke my heart. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sue's boyfriend decided to study abroad. This broke <u>her</u> heart.



8. When you start a new relationship, you are afraid about your new partner brakes your heart.
-

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Read the short dialogues and decide whether the idiom used makes sense or doesn't make sense. Circle the correct answer.

- My heart started beating really fast when I saw Mary for the first time.
- It must have been love at first sight.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I can't stand Michael. He is such a jerk.
- I think you have a crush on him.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Andrew invited me to watch a movie with him.
- What? Did he ask you out?
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Peter hasn't spoken to me since last week.
- I'm sure he's hitting on you.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I am so happy!
- I know. Your boyfriend has been cheating on you.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- My boyfriend is having an affair.
- Don't cry. He doesn't deserve you.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I feel like my girlfriend no longer loves me.
- You should break up with her.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Mike just broke my heart.
- Let's celebrate!
Makes sense / doesn't make sense



F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

See the pictures below. Work in groups and share your ideas about the situation the pictures make you think. Use idioms to express your ideas.





UNIT # 2: YOU LOOK GREAT!!! YOU ARE IN GOOD SHAPE. (HEALTH IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures and the statements on the following page, try to guess whether the definitions of the idioms in bold are true or false.





1. Mark went to the doctor. He needed a **checkup**.

Definition: vaccine

True False

2. After Daniel drank too much, I realized he was **out cold**.

Definition: to be fainted

True False

3. For their New Year's resolution, many people decide to go **on a diet**.

Definition: to eat unhealthy

True False

4. I'm dizzy. I think I'm gonna **black out**.

Definition: to vomit

True False

5. I didn't go to school because I **came down with** the flu.

Definition: to become ill

True False

6. At Christmas, people usually **put on weight**.

Definition: to gain weight

True False

7. I don't mind being **on medication**. I know it's for my own good.

Definition: taking medicine

True False

8. Let's go to the gym. We need to be **in good shape** for the wedding.

Definition: beautiful

True
 False



B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

1. Did you guess the correct meaning of the idioms? The following dialogues will help you better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: Mark and Betty are at the gym.

Mark: Hey, Betty. You look great!!! What are you doing?

Betty: Oh, thanks Mark. You know, next month is my sister's wedding, so I have to get **in good shape**₁.

Mark: Yeah, but we haven't seen for a long time, and you have changed a lot.

Betty: You're right. After giving birth, I **put on** a lot of **weight**₂. I was about 200 pounds, and now I am 150.

Mark: Wow!! That's an extreme change. Tell me your secret!!.

Betty: Hahaha!! There is no secret. All you need is to eat healthy and exercise. That's what I did. I was **on a diet**₃, and I come to the gym three times a week.

Mark: Oh wow. I am really surprised with your change. I will take your advice even though it's hard for me to avoid eating hamburgers

Conversation 2: Peter and Alan are in the hospital.

Peter: Hey Alan!!!

Alan: Hi Peter! Sorry, I didn't see you. What's up?

Peter: Not so good. I just visited my doctor, and he told me that I **came down with**₄ gastritis. I'm **on medication**₅ now.

Alan: Sorry bro. You have to follow the doctor's instructions and stop drinking. Do you remember that you even **blacked out**₆ at the last party?

Peter: Yeah. I need to take care of myself.

Alan: Do what the doctor told you, and I'm sure you're gonna get better.

Peter: Thanks man. What about you? What are you doing here?

Alan: I was playing basketball, and somebody hit my head with the ball, and I was **out cold**₇.

Peter: Oh my god! That was really dangerous. So you came for a **checkup**₈?

Alan: Well, I already visited the doctor. I just came to get the results. Fortunately, everything is okay.



1. In a good condition either physically or functionally.
2. To gain weight.
3. Eating healthy in order to lose weight,
4. To become ill.
5. Taking medicine to get better.
6. To become unconscious.
7. Unconscious either by intoxication, illness, or emotional state.
8. Medical control or examination.

C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	EXPLANATION
<p>In good shape (Note: it is also used as "in shape." Good is implied.)</p>	<p>This phrase is used after a verb. For example: - Next month is my sister's wedding, so I have to be in good shape / in shape. More examples: - The challenge is not to lose weight but to keep in good shape. - Martha has been doing yoga to be in good shape.</p>
<p>To put on weight</p>	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. Examples: - After giving birth, I put on a lot of weight More examples: - John has stopped jogging in the mornings. Now, he is putting on weight fast. - Dianna put on a lot of weight after quitting the gym.</p>
<p>On a diet</p>	<p>This expression is used after a verb. For instance: - All you need is to eat healthy and exercise. That's what I did. I was on a diet, and I come to the gym three times a week. More examples: - Most people plan to go on a diet on Mondays. - I can't eat pizza. I'm on a diet.</p>
	<p>This idiom is a phrasal verb and is always</p>



<p>To come down with</p>	<p>used with an illness. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I just visited my doctor, and he told me that I came down with <u>gastritis</u>. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rose came down with a strange <u>disease</u> after going to Africa.- Kevin played soccer in the rain last night. Now, he is coming down with <u>a cold</u>.
<p>On medication</p>	<p>This phrase is used after a verb. In addition, it can be abbreviated as “on meds.” For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I just visited my doctor, and he told me that I came down with gastritis. I’m on medication now. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Should I <u>stay on medication</u> after feeling better?- Christian can’t stand <u>being on meds</u> because he loves drinking.
<p>To black out</p>	<p>This idiom is a phrasal verb. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you remember that you even blacked out at the last party? <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My little niece fell down and hit her head against the floor. She blacked out for a few minutes.
<p>Out cold</p>	<p>It is used after the verb “to be.” For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I was playing basketball, and somebody hit my head with the ball, and I was out cold. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- After Johanna got a shock, she <u>was out cold</u>.- Mark was drinking too much at the party. When everybody left, he was out cold.
<p>Checkup</p>	<p>This expression is used as a noun. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- That was really dangerous. So you came for a checkup? <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Doctors recommend an annual checkup to prevent diseases.



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Match each sentence with the given situation.

- () Ashley put on a lot of weight after her pregnancy.
- () I'm on medication.
- () My personal trainer says that working out isn't enough to lose pounds.
- () Eating healthy, drinking 8 glasses of water per day, and doing exercise are my secrets...
- () Brenda is having headaches constantly.
- () Mark couldn't go to her best friend's anniversary.
- () The student didn't have breakfast before coming to school.
- () The poor man was out cold for about an hour.

- 1. Nobody could explain how a stone hit him on his head.
- 2. She needs to go to the gym and start dieting.
- 3. I heard he came down with a very bad cold.
- 4. She blacked out in the classroom just before Math class ended.
- 5. I must start being on a diet if I want to see results.
- 6. She should go to her doctor for a checkup.
- 7. I can't drink alcohol.
- 8. to be in good shape.

2. Read the following statements; then choose the right word from the box to complete them:

diet	down	good	out
cold	checkup	put	on

- 1. Our neighbor fell down and hit her head so hard that she was out _____ for a long time.
- 2. I am in a special program to lose weight. The best thing about this is that I don't need to be on a _____.
- 3. I always say to Stephany she doesn't need to go to the gym since she is already in _____ shape.
- 4. I would like to earn my own money as easy as I _____ on weight.
- 5. When I am _____ medication, my mom has to phone me because I have problems with my memory.



6. Eli didn't appear at the party. Then somebody told us she came _____ with a terrible cold.
7. My grandmother was sick, so we decided to take her to the doctor for a _____.
8. Nelly is just recovering from surgery. In the beginning it was difficult for her; she was so weak that she could black _____ at any time.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

According to the answers, select the appropriate question.

The answer is:
Yeah, she's in good shape.

Questions:

- Mary has lost weight. She looks great. Have you seen her?
- Mary has put on weight after going to the U.S. Have you seen her?
- Is Mary going to the gym? Have you seen her there?

The answer is:
I don't think so. She is on a diet.

Questions:

- Are you planning to have a birthday party for Ashley?
- Should I invite Ashley to hang out for her birthday?
- Should I invite Ashley to eat out for her birthday?

The answer is:
They put on weight.

Questions:

- What happens when people eat healthy?
- What happens when people eat a lot of carbohydrates?
- What happens when people start practicing sports?



The answer is:

Yes, I'm already on medication.

Questions:

- Do you need to visit the doctor again?
- What did the doctor say after the checkup?
- I heard you weren't feeling well. Have you gone to the doctor yet?

The answer is:

I have no idea. I drank a lot, and I was out cold.

Questions:

- Do you remember what the priest said during mass?
- Do you remember what happened during the party?
- Do you know what the lecture is about?

The answer is:

Well, I'm doing my annual checkup.

Questions:

- What are you doing here in the hospital?
- Did the doctor give you the results?
- Are you still on medication?

The answer is:....

Don't you know? He came down with the flu, and he has been hospitalized for two days.

Questions:

- Do you know why Andrew is mad at me?
- Do you know why Andrew didn't attend classes today?
- Andrew is not here. Can you help me with my homework?



The answer is:

No, I almost blacked out.
Take me to the doctor,
please!!!

Questions:

- You look great. Have you lost weight?
- You don't look okay. Are you feeling under the weather?
- You look pale. Are you okay?

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Read the following questions and answer them using the idioms you learned in this lesson whenever possible.



Your friend is putting on a lot of weight. What do you recommend for her to do?



Webpage: www.drjamesstrickland.com



Why shouldn't people who are taking pills drink alcohol?

Webpage: <http://stylerug.net>



What is the secret to staying in good shape?



Webpage: www.sidneyhospital.com



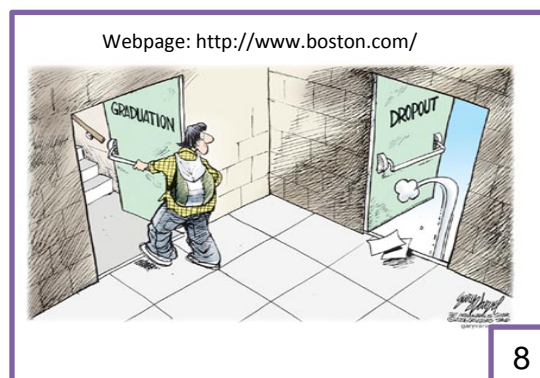
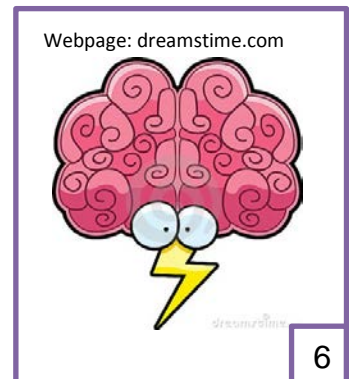
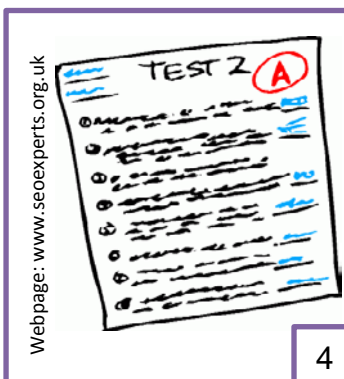
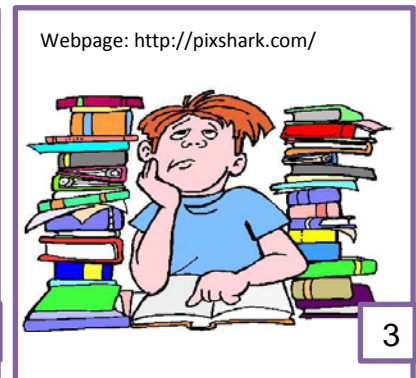
What should you do to prevent yourself from coming down with an illness?



UNIT # 3: DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IS OUT OF QUESTION!!! (SCHOOL IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures, try to guess what the idioms mean. Underline the correct meaning.





1. Michael never studies and cheats on exams. He is such a **copycat!!!**
Copycat means: a cheater A lazy person
2. I studied since the beginning of the year. That's why I got **straight A's**.
Straight A's means: the highest grade a perfect grade
3. I haven't gone to school for two weeks. I have **to catch up on** my studies now!
Catch up means: to do what you haven't done to study
4. Dylan **aced** his Literature exam, and he didn't even study!!!
To ace means: to get an A to get average grades
5. I'm planning to give **a pop quiz** to my students. I want to know if they are learning.
A pop quiz means: a mid-term exam a surprise quiz
6. The teacher asked the students to **brainstorm** about the advantages and disadvantages of social media.
Brainstorm means: to give ideas about something to write a report
7. The students decided where to go on the school trip by **a show of hands**.
A show of hands means: to participate in class to raise hands to vote
8. I can't believe David **dropped out** of school. He was about to graduate!!!
To drop out of school means: to be absent to quit school

B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? The following conversations will help you better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: *Two teachers are talking about their students.*

Mr. Smith: Ms. White, I heard your students are doing well. Congrats!!!

Ms. White: Oh, thanks. I have three students who always get **straight A's**₁.
They are very smart.

Mr. Smith: That's great! Unfortunately, three of my students **dropped out**
of₂ school, but their grades weren't low at all.

Ms. White: Oh, that's bad. This year, there has been a high rate of dropouts. That's a serious problem.

Mr. Smith: Yeah, but let's not talk about bad things. Tell me, what methodology do you apply to have a good average on grades?



Ms. White: haha, there's no secret. I just give students a **pop quiz**₃ to test if they are learning or understanding. Of course, they're not graded, but it helps me know better students' weaknesses.

Mr. Smith: Wow! That's a good technique.

Mr. White: Well, I need to get going. I have **to catch up on**₄ my lesson plans.

Conversation 2: Peter and Mary are talking about class issues.

Peter: Mary, did you hear that the teacher caught Michael cheating on the exam?

Mary: Yeah, I was there. He was so embarrassed that he couldn't say anything. Anyway, he has always cheated on exams. He is such a **copycat**₅!

Peter: I didn't know, so that's why he always **aced**₆ his exams!

Mary: Well, did you know that the open house is coming soon?

Peter: Yes, our teacher asked us to **brainstorm**₇ on topics for the project we have to present.

Mary: that's great. You know, our teacher gave us two topics, and we had to decide by **a show of hands**₈.

1. Perfect grades
2. Quit attending school
3. A surprise test
4. To do what you haven't had time to do
5. To be a cheater
6. To do extremely well on a test or exam
7. To think new ideas about a topic
8. A way to vote or decide on something by raising the hand.



C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	EXPLANATION
To brainstorm	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. However, it can also be used as a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our teacher asked us to brainstorm on topics for the project we have to present. (verb) <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative and better ideas come up from brainstorming. (noun) - The president of the student council asked the members to brainstorm about what topics the school newspaper should be compiled. (verb)
To catch up on	<p>This expression functions as a verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have to catch up on my lesson plans. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I've been so busy, but this weekend, I'm gonna catch up on my T.V show. - Daniel can still pass Math if he catches up on all the homework.
Copycat	<p>It is a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He has always cheated on exams. He is such a copycat! <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the beginning of the year, Ms. White told her class that she can't stand cheating. She also said that copycats would be severely punished if caught red-handed.
To drop out of school	<p>This phrase acts as a verb. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three of my students dropped out of school, but their grades weren't low at all. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ian dropped out of school after getting bad grades on the mid-term exams.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There are many reasons that make people drop out of school, but one reason is for financial issues.
To ace	<p>This idiom is used as a verb. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He always aced his exams. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I was proud of myself because I've aced the exam.
Straight A's	<p>This expression functions as a noun. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have three students who always get straight A's. They are very smart. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Alice has gotten straight A's since she was a child.
Pop quiz	<p>It is used as a noun. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I just give students a pop quiz to test if they are learning or understanding. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- When I was in high school, teachers usually gave a pop quiz to know how well students were doing in class.
Show of hands	<p>This phrase functions as a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our teacher gave us two topics, and we had to decide by a show of hands which one we wanted to do. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Teachers often have students make a decision by a show of hands.



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Read the following phrases on the left, then match with the appropriate option from the right. Write down the corresponding letter on the line.

- ___ Wendy hardly ever studies for her tests..
- ___ I was worried for the final, so I studied hard for it..
- ___ The 4th grade teacher asks his students to give ideas about any topic, so..
- ___ I have only two weeks to catch up to my English lessons..
- ___ We always have a pop quiz at the end of the class..
- ___ The principal told Tom's teachers that he's not coming to class because he dropped out of school..
- ___ Karla is a good student. She likes studying a lot, and..
- ___ The students had to elect a person to represent the class, so the teacher proposed a show of hands..

- A. they brainstorm, and it really works.
- B. they were surprised with this news. He was a good student, and they were sad to hear he wasn't returning.
- C. she always copies from her classmates. She is a copycat.
- D. she always gets straight A's.
- E. but it was worthy because I totally aced it.
- F. otherwise, I'll fail my English test.
- G. the majority supported Emily because she was a good student and everybody liked her.
- H. so we all pay attention during the whole lesson.



2. Fill in the crossword puzzle by choosing the correct word(s) from the list below.

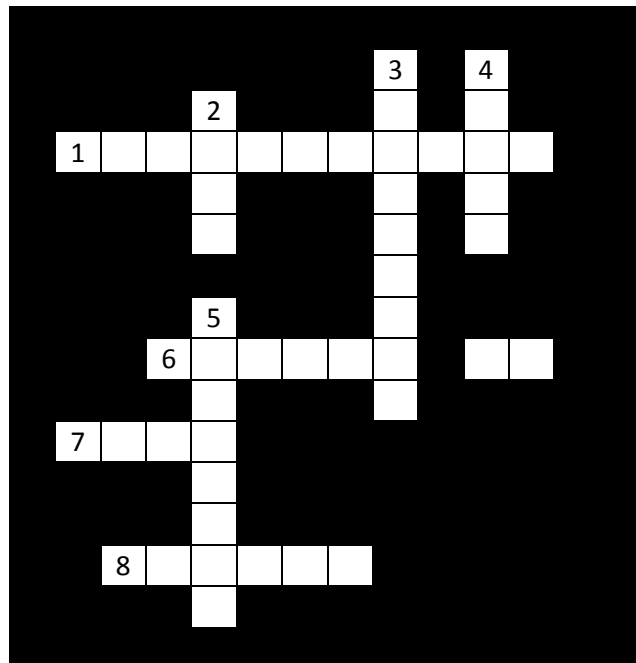
catch up / copycat / ace / straight
brainstorm / pop / hands / drop

ACROSS

1. Students were asked to _____ to better organize their ideas before writing their essays.
6. I have to _____ on my reading if I don't want to fail my literature class.
7. A good way to make sure your students are learning is by giving them a _____ quiz.
8. A show of _____ is a good way to make a class decision.

DOWN

2. Monica puts a lot of effort in to _____ her Math tests.
3. Everybody knows that Jenny is gonna get a scholarship at Harvard. After all, she only gets _____ A's.
4. Michael decided to _____ out of school after he got a full-time job.
5. The teacher knows who the _____ in class is.





E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Student A is going to ask some questions. Student B is going to use the suggested word(s) to come up with the answers.

STUDENT A	STUDENT B
1. I know your teacher likes you to participate in class. What do you usually do to give your ideas?	Well... (use: to brainstorm)
2. Is Ryan a good student?	Yes... (use: straight As)
3. I haven't seen Mike in class. Do you know what happened with him?	Actually... (use: to drop out of school)
4. Did you notice that David was looking at Renee's exam while they were testing?	Yes... (use: copycat)
5. My English teacher usually gives us short tests at the end of our lessons. What about your teacher?	You know... (use: pop quiz)
6. Hey Nick!! Tell me, how well did you do your test?	Fortunately... (use: to ace)
7. Did everybody agree on the date for the exam?	Yes... (use: a show of hands)
8. Henry was sick, and he missed some classes. What can he do?	Easy... (to catch up to)

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Read the following situations. Give your ideas about what to do by using the idioms you learned in this lesson.

You are the teacher, and you have to decide where to go for the school trip. You have two places, and you want your students to decide where they would best like to go.

Your classmates make fun of you because you almost always fail your exams, but you want to show them what you can do.

You are trying to get a scholarship to study abroad, and the principal asks you about your grades.



You present your students with a new topic, and you want them to think about it.

You notice your students don't pay attention in class. You want them to start focusing on your lessons.

Because he was sick, your student didn't come to school for two weeks.

One of your students has an opportunity to take a full time job, but he likes

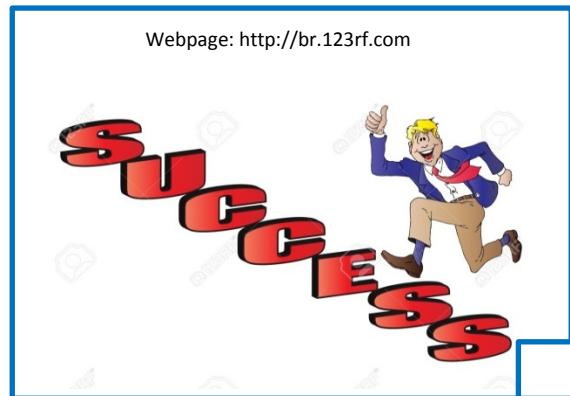
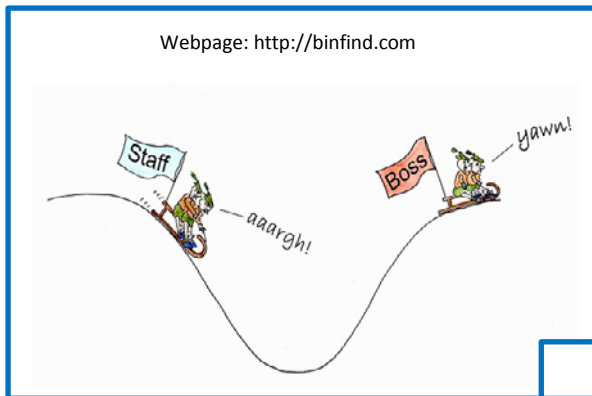
You caught your student copying from another student's exam. You asked her parents to come to school in order to talk about this situation.



UNIT # 4: SALES HAVE FALLEN. IT'S TIME FOR A PLAN B! (BUSINESS IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences below them. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess their meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the sentences.





1. Darien **made a killing** by selling those new products. It is an incredible success!
2. Ian is **on a roll**. He is selling every item without refunds.
3. My father **started** his business **from scratch**. It is really admirable!
4. The new enterprise has **come a long way** since its beginning in 2000.
5. We need a **plan B**. Otherwise, we might go bankrupt.
6. I hate when salespeople start with their **hard sell**. I prefer to close the door.
7. Stop Joseph! This is a serious matter. **Get down to business** now.
8. Our boss is always **ahead of the curve**. That's why he makes a lot of money.

B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Read the following story and notice the context in which these idioms are used.

*My grandpa was a great business man, but it was difficult for him to reach his goal. First, he worked as a carpenter while he studied. Later, he joined a company where his coworkers taught him the **hard sell**₁. He worked as a salesman for five years in which he learned how to manage a business. One day, he decided to open his own business with the money he saved from his work, and he **started** a bakery **from scratch**₂. In the beginning, it was a small shop, but my grandpa was a hard worker, and he never gave up. Constantly, he strived to improve his baking skills and create new kinds of bread. Due to his effort, one day he **made a killing**₃ by selling his new Danish bread. After that, his business became well-known by his customers who didn't hesitate in recommending his bakery to other people.*

*My grandpa's business was **on a roll**₄.*



My grandpa's secret wasn't only to work hard but also to be ahead of the curve⁵. He always asked his customers for suggestions about his bread. His motto was "the customer is always right."

As with every business, my grandpa's bakery had a few problems, but he always had a plan B⁶ to overcome whatever issue arose. He wanted his son to learn the business, but my father wanted to earn money without taking into account my grandpa's customers. When my grandpa realized this, he told my dad his story about how he became successful, and that the love of work is more important than money. After this advice, my father got down to business⁷, and now he is also a successful businessman.

My grandpa's business has come a long way⁸, and after 60 years, the most successful bakery in our city.

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1. A hard-pressure way to sell something.
2. To start something from the very beginning.
3. To be successful making money.
4. Series of successes
5. To take preventive actions before having problems.
6. An extra plan
7. To get serious about what has to be done.
8. To improve over time.



C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	EXPLANATION
To make a killing	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Due to his effort, one day he made a killing by selling his new Danish bread. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dylan's dream is to make a killing by becoming a soccer player.- Martha makes a killing as a surgeon.
On a roll	<p>This phrase is used as a noun. It usually goes after the verb "to be." For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My grandpa's business was on a roll. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adam is on a roll. I hope things continue to go well for him.
Plan B	<p>This saying is used as a noun. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My grandpa's bakery had a few problems, but he always had a plan B to overcome them. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Things haven't been going well for the last year. We need to think of a plan B now.
	This idiom is used as a noun. Example:



<p>Ahead of the curve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- My grandpa's secret wasn't only to work hard but also to be ahead of the curve. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our manager knows how to take preventive actions. He is always ahead of the curve.- The new president says that it's more important staying ahead of the curve than solving problems whenever they occur.
<p>To start (something) from scratch</p>	<p>This expression is used as a verb. An object (noun or object pronoun) can be placed between "start" and "from." For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He decided to open his own business with the money he saved from his work, and he started <u>a bakery</u> from scratch.- My father started <u>his business</u> from scratch. Due to his effort, it grew over time.- When my grandpa started his business, he started from scratch.
<p>To come a long way</p>	<p>This phrase functions as a verb.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My grandpa's business has come a long way, and after 60 years, the most successful bakery in our city. <p>Another example:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If you are a business person, you have to be patient, responsible, and a hard worker so that your business can come a long way.
Hard sell	<p>This idiom is used as a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He joined a company where his coworkers taught him the hard sell. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sometimes, one enters in a store just to ask for a price, but then the clerk starts giving the hard sell.
To get down to business	<p>It is used as a verb. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My father got down to business, and now he is also a successful man. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The president of the company was sick, and he didn't go to work. Nobody focused on their work and nothing was accomplished. But when he came back to work, everybody started to get down to business.



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Fill in the blanks with the right phrase from the left:

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1	My father is a leader in his job. He always has a _____ to solve any problem.	to get down to business
2	Michael is working for an important enterprise. He is in charge of the management department, and he is _____.	ahead of the curve
3	The store wants to hire someone who always gives the _____. They need to sell the merchandise before Christmas.	hard sell
4	When my older brother decided to start a business, my father said, "okay, I am going to support you, but you need _____"	to make a killing
5	My best friend is a smart businesswoman, and she is always _____. She knows how to control any difficulty. That's why she is so successful.	come a long way
6	The best business people have _____, and now their business allows other people to be part of them.	on a roll
7	I am very proud of my father because he has _____ with his company. They are 30 years since he opened it.	started from scratch
8	Sarah is really happy!! She got a job which has a really good pay. She thinks she will _____ in a short time	plan B



2. Rewrite the following statements by replacing the idioms with Standard English without losing the meaning of the sentences.

a) It's hard to manage a business alone, but it's even harder to start it from scratch.

b) Our company made a killing by selling some discontinued products. But it's not surprising! They were very famous back then in 1960.

c) The boss should show up more often. If not, the employees won't get down to business.

d) The manager decided to implement a plan B after losing too much money advertising the new product.

e) Coca-Cola Company has come a long way since 1892.

f) The manager learned to be ahead of the curve after having lost money in the last project.



g) Charles puts all his effort in doing his job well. He is on a roll!!!

h) The salesman started giving me the hard sell just after I came in the shop.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Decide whether the words in bold are correctly or incorrectly used in the following statements. Check the right box.

a) The president of the enterprise is really smart. He is always **ahead of the curve**, and he knows how to act if there is any problem.

Right

Wrong

b) Unfortunately, this year the sales have decreased, so we have **made a killing**.

Right

Wrong

c) My family's business is not going great. We are **on a roll**. Things have to change!!

Right

Wrong

d) Good bosses need to have a **plan B** in order to make their employees succeed.

Right

Wrong

e) After my grandpa's business failed, his children decided to open it again and **to start from scratch**.

Right

Wrong

f) Once the new owners of the factory took over, they realized that the factory had not **come a long way**. Afterward, they decided to increase the employees' salaries.

Right

Wrong



- g) A good seller doesn't often use the **hard sell**. That's why he / she sells a lot without too much effort.
- Right Wrong
- h) When one decides to start a business, it is important to focus on organizing things and working hard. In other words, it is necessary to **get down to business**.
- Right Wrong

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN



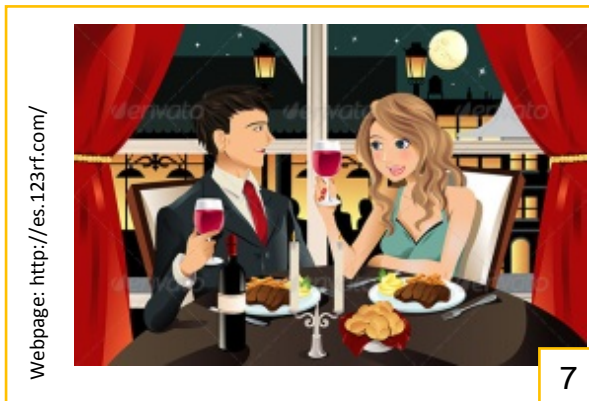
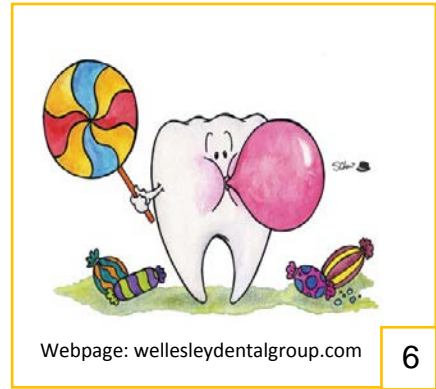
**Make up a dialogue using as many idioms for business as you can.
Then act it out in front of your class.**



UNIT # 5: I'M STARVING!!! LET'S GRAB A BITE (FOOD IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By reading the sentences and looking at the pictures, try to guess the meaning of the idioms by choosing one of the two options:





1. I need to **grab a bite** before going back to work.
 To get something to eat To bite food
2. The ice cream is so good that it **melts in my mouth**.
 To dissolve slowly. To taste very delicious.
3. Gina is on a diet, but she shouldn't **skip** her meals.
 To omit a meal. To eat quickly.
4. The vet prohibited me from feeding my dogs with **leftovers**.
 Remaining food. Spoiled food.
5. I asked for a hamburger, but the French fries weren't complementary. I'm gonna ask for **a side of** them.
 The extent to which food is cooked. An extra order of something.
6. Rhonda eats at least five candy bars a day. Her **sweet tooth** is insatiable!
 To love eating sweets. To have a candy in the mouth.
7. Daniel asked me to **dine out** with him. It was the best night ever!!!
 To eat dinner. To eat in a restaurant.
8. You should try the new dessert. It's to **die for!!!**
 To be extremely delicious. To eat poisoned food.

1. To get something to eat. (usually something fast to eat)
2. Something extremely good.
3. A person who loves sweet food.
4. To taste very delicious.
5. To eat at a restaurant.
6. An extra order of something. (food)
7. To not eat something or omit a meal.
8. Food remaining after a meal.



B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? The following dialogues will help you better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: *Laura and Monique are trying to decide what to eat.*

Monique: Hey Laura! I'm starving!!! Let's **grab a bite**₁.

Laura: Yeah! Me too. I know a place where the cheesecakes are **to die for**₂.

Monique: Oh, come on, Laura. You're such a **sweet tooth**₃!!! I'm in the mood for something salty, though.

Laura: Okay, so what would you like to eat?

Monique: Mmmm. I don't know. What about pizza or a hamburger?

Laura: Perfect! Let's have a hamburger, but then let's go for the cheesecake. It's so delicious that it **melts in your mouth**₄!

Conversation 2: *Gerald and Mona are in a restaurant.*

Gerald: Mona, I wanna thank you for accepting my invitation **to dine out**₅.

Mona: No, thank you for inviting me.

Waiter: Excuse me. Good evening. Are you ready to order?

Gerald: What are today's specials?

Waiter: Today we have grilled tuna and steak with creamy Italian herb sauce.

Mona: Mmmm. Sounds delicious. I think I'll have the grilled tuna. What about you, Gerald?

Gerald: Yeah! The same for me.

Waiter: The grilled tuna is served with a choice of rice, baked potatoes, or French fries.

Mona: Baked potatoes with **a side of**₆ salad, please.

Gerald: Rice for me, please.

Waiter: Anything to drink?

Gerald: A bottle of wine, please.

Waiter: Can I get you anything else? Dessert or coffee?

Mona: I want **to skip**₇ the dessert. What about you, Gerald?

Gerald: No, thank you. We're okay. Could you bring me the bill and the **leftover**₈ wine, please?

Waiter: Sure. I'll be right back.



C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	EXPLANATION
To dine out	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mona, I wanna thank you for accepting my invitation to dine out. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Let's dine out tonight.- Carol isn't here. I think she is dining out with her fiancé.- Yesterday, I dined out with my family. The food was really good.
To grab a bite	<p>This expression is a verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hey Laura! I'm starving!!! Let's grab a bite. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I'm not hungry. I grabbed a bite on the way home from work..- I feel like grabbing a bite on our way to the wedding. I'm starving.- Marissa always grabs a bite when she goes to the supermarket.
To melt in one's mouth	<p>It is a verb. A possessive adjective goes between "in" and "mouth." Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It's so delicious that it melts in your mouth! <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The dessert that you made yesterday was so delicious that it melted in my mouth.- Have you tried the new dish at Domingo's restaurant? It melts in your mouth.



Sweet tooth	It acts as a noun. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You're such a sweet tooth!!! More examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jenny eats three chocolate bars every day. She really has a sweet tooth.- A dentist with a sweet tooth is irony.
To die for	This idiom is used as a verb. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I know a place where the cheesecakes are to die for. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Grandmas usually prepare desserts to die for. They know how to make their grandchildren happy.
A side of	This expression functions as a noun. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- [I'd like to order] baked potatoes with a side of salad, please. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My mother usually gets a side of fries with her burger.
To skip	It is used as a verb. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I want to skip the dessert. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Doctors recommend not skipping breakfast since it is an essential meal of the day.
Leftovers	This phrase has a double function: as a noun and as an adjective. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Could you bring me the bill and the leftover wine, please? (adjective) More examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is always a lot of leftovers from Christmas dinner, so we have plenty to eat for the next couple days. (noun)



	- After having lunch, I ask my mother to collect the leftover food to give it to the dogs on the street.(adjective)
--	--

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Circle the phrase that better completes the following statements:

- a) I can't believe it!! Tom invited me to (**dine out / drop off / study**) for my birthday.
- b) There are many of us in my family, so when we order food out, we usually ask for an extra (**big bag / side of / dressings**) rice.
- c) I didn't know why I was starving. Then I remembered that I (**had / took / skipped**) lunch because I needed to finish my homework.
- d) Danna surprised me!! Even though she loves eating, she was so full that she had (**soup / dessert / leftovers**) from our lunch together. This has never happened!!
- e) Before my classmates and I have to work on any assignment at home, we often (**grab a bite / listen to music / watch a movie**) to give us some energy.
- f) Have you noticed that grandmas prepare food that is (**to be proud of / to die for / to skip**)? I think it's a strategy to make us visit them more frequently.
- g) Gina is crazy about desserts. She is such a (**gourmand / girlish / sweet tooth**). After having lunch, she always asks for something sweet.
- h) When I arrive home after school, my mom is always preparing something delightful to eat that it (**melts in my mouth / tastes delicious / calls my attention**). I always look forward to eat.

2. The underlined words are written in Standard English. Rewrite them by using the idioms from this unit

- My crush invited me to eat at a restaurant.



- I'm hungry! I need to get something to eat.
- My brother has always been a person who loves eating sweets.
- Some people think that by not eating a meal, they are gonna lose weight.
- My grandma prepares a delicious chocolate cake that is extremely good.
- Let's ask for an extra order of nachos. There isn't enough!
- Keep the remaining food in the fridge. Don't waste it.
- This Oreo ice cream tastes very delicious. I want some more.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Complete the following story by using the idioms from this unit.

One day, after having been on a diet for two weeks, I decided to stop since I felt like I was starving!! That day I had _____ breakfast, and I just wanted _____ . I had heard about a restaurant where the food was _____. So I decided to go there. When I was in that restaurant, I asked for rice with chicken and _____ salad. And as I am a _____, I also ordered a brownie. The food was excellent, but the brownie was the best thing I had tried!! I still remember its taste and it _____. The same day, my boyfriend called and invited me to _____. It might sound surprising, but we went to the same restaurant where I had been in the morning, and as I told you, the food was so delicious that it was impossible to have any _____.



F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

The following pictures represent idioms learnt in this unit. Write a short dialogue using them.









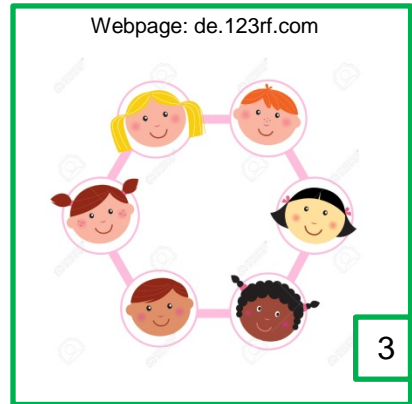




UNIT # 6: WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE... TIME IS MONEY, MY FRIEND! (WORK IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures, try to guess whether the definitions of the idioms in bold are true or false in the statements on the next page.





1. It is necessary to look for a better leader in our group, our leader seems to be **asleep at the wheel**.

Definition: *sensitive*

True

False

2. Daniel **calls all the shots**, but in the end, he makes the best decisions.

Definition: *to give orders*

True

False

3. **“Put your heads together** and brainstorm ideas about what to do to beat the competition,” our CEO said.

Definition: *to share ideas in a group*

True

False

4. The supervisor always **keeps an eye on** me; I can't focus on what I'm doing.

Definition: *to monitor closely*

True

False

5. Everybody loves **coffee breaks**, but John is too anxious to have it that he counts the minutes.

Definition: *to drink coffee*

True

False

6. My job was so boring that **hanging it up** was the best decision I have made in years!

Definition: *to keep trying*

True

False

7. David has been making a lot of mistakes lately; he's been **spacing out** at work.

Definition: *to focus on what you have to do*

True

False

8. I need a new proposal for tomorrow morning. I won't accept excuses. **Time is money!!!**

Definition: *time is valuable*

True

False



B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? The following dialogue will help you better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation: *Alex and Steven are talking at work.*

Alex: Hey, Steve! Did you know that Sandy **hang it up**₁ this morning?

Steve: No way!!! Really? But she was an efficient worker. What was the reason?

Alex: The manager called her attention because of a tiny mistake, and she didn't

like it. A few minutes later, she presented her resignation letter and left the place.

Steve: What? Did she do that? But Sandy is a very polite person and very smart as

well. I can't imagine her doing that!

Alex: I know what you mean, but lately she has been **spacing out**₂. The manager

noticed it. You know, he always **keeps an eye on**₃ us.

Steve: What a pity! She was a cheerful, nice person. We often took our **coffee**

breaks₄ together, and she made me laugh.

Alex: I liked her, too. Any way, we need to be careful because after this incident, the manager is gonna **call the shots**₅ and fire any employee

asleep at the wheel₆.

Steve: Well, he has always been a bossy person.

Alex: Yeah, I don't like him. He is kind of rude.

Steve: Look at the clock!!! Coffee break has finished. Let's go and **put our heads together**₇ to finish our proposal. Remember, **time is money**₈!

1. To quit.
2. Not focus on what is being done.
3. To supervise or monitor very closely
4. A short time to take a rest from work and usually drink coffee.
5. To make decisions about an issue
6. To be distracted
7. To work in team to give ideas and solve a problem.
8. Time is treasured.



C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how idioms are used.

IDIOMS	EXPLANATION
To hang it up	<p>This idiom is a verb, and it acts as a whole. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you know that Sandy hang it up this morning? <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My boss is always nagging at me, so I decided to hang it up. - The manager is hanging it up. After all, he didn't get promoted.
Asleep at the wheel	<p>This expression is used as a noun. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The manager is gonna call the shots and fire any employee asleep at the wheel. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chief engineer was asleep at the wheel when the machines began to fail.
Time is money	<p>This is a particular idiom since it is a whole sentence. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remember, time is money! <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chef says that he can't waste his time greeting his clients. "Time is money" is his favorite saying.
To put one's heads together	<p>This saying acts as a verb. The possessive adjectives used in this idiom are: "your," "their," and "our." For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let's go and put our heads together to solve this problem. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We need to put our heads together if we want to solve this problem. - "You must deal with this. So put your heads together, and give me a solution until tomorrow," said my boss.
	<p>This expression is used as a verb. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The manager is gonna call the



To call the shots	shots and fire any employee asleep at the wheel. Another example: - My boss calls the shots in our department.
To space out	This idiom functions as a verb. For example: - She has been spacing out . Another example: - It is easy to recognize when my coworker has problems because she usually is spacing out at work.
To keep an eye on	It is used as a verb. An object (a noun or an object pronoun) is needed after "on." Example: - He always keeps an eye on us. Another example: - Luis is a new employee, so the manager often keeps an eye on him.
Coffee break	This phrase functions as a noun. For instance: - We often took our coffee breaks together. Another example: - The new director prohibited coffee breaks in the office.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. There is an extra word in each one of the following statements. Look for the incorrect word and cross it out. Then rewrite the sentences in the correct way.

a) Everyone in the office is looking forward to having a coffee up break.

b) Nelson couldn't stand his boss, so he hung it in up.



c) My coworker asked me to keep into an eye on his computer.
He is working on a confidential report.

d) While everyone was giving suggestions to improve the sales,
Ben was asleep at from the wheel.

e) When we meet with our boss, he usually directs questions to
those who are spacing under out.

f) What bad luck!! I was late today and my manager said to me,
“Hey, remember, time is over money!!

g) The owner of the factory is worried about the quality of the
products. He said it´s time for him to start calling on all the
shots.

h) A good leader proposes to work in a team. In other words, he /
she asks everyone to put their heads onto together.



2. Complete the following sentences by matching them with their appropriate

- ___ 1. After our leader made such a mistake,...
- ___ 2. Simon is new in the company.
- ___ 3. Our boss advised us to put our heads together.
- ___ 4. It's too much work to do. I feel exhausted.
- ___ 5. Benny is really efficient. He does all his manager asks him to do.
- ___ 6. Maggie is in love with her coworker.
- ___ 7. When we arrive late at work,...
- ___ 8. After the reports showed that the sales decreased,...

- a) He's never asleep at the wheel.
- b) I think I am gonna hang it up.
- c) the chief decided to call the shots.
- d) We should invite him to have the coffee break to get to know him better.
- e) our boss always remind us that time is money!!
- f) the manager started to keep an eye on all of us.
- g) Since then, everything has been working well.
- h) She is spacing out all the time. I think she needs to focus more.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Read the short dialogues and decide whether the idiom used makes sense or doesn't make sense. Circle the correct answer.

- My job is great! I have a good salary, and there's not much work to do.

- Oh, nice! You should hang it up.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I apologize for making that big mistake in my reports.

- That's what happens when you are spacing out!

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Mary is exhausted. She took an hour break.

- She deserved it. After all, time is money.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense



- Why didn't Brian do what his boss asked him to do?
○ I think he was asleep at the wheel.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- During the meeting, the chief was spacing out. Erick asked him about the new merchandise, but he couldn't answer.
○ How strange! He always keeps an eye on our work.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Have you seen the new coworker? He is very handsome!
○ Oh, sorry. I need to finish these accounts. Let's talk during the coffee break.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- The new manager doesn't know who will be in charge of the new branch.
○ That's not strange since he doesn't know the capabilities of his staff. But as a manager, he needs to call the shots.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I heard you had an argument with your boss. What happened?
○ Oh, don't worry. We just put out heads together.
Makes sense / doesn't make sense

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Read the following situations. Answer the questions by using the idioms you learned in this unit.

Your coworker is distracted. He hasn't done any of his work. What would you say to him?



The marketing staff has given us three viable ideas to increase the sales of the products. However, each of them will cost too much money for the company. What would you do?

I have been working for the last five hours on this proposal. My mind is blocked. What should I do?

You are the manager of a company. There is a new employee, and you want to make sure his work is good. What should you do?

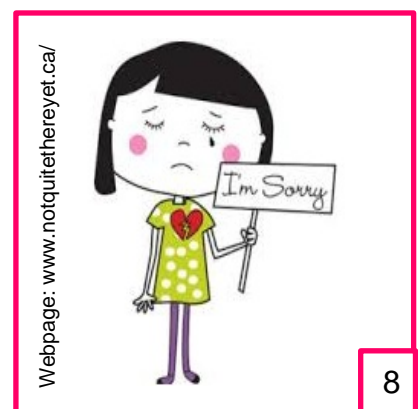
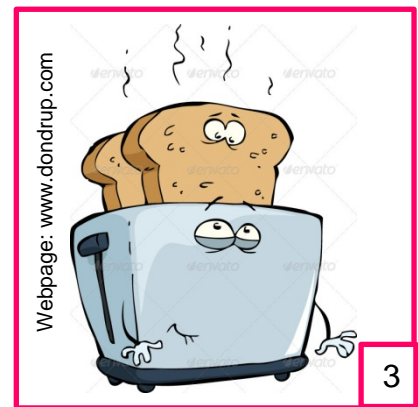
The selling techniques of the company are not working. The sales are very low. What should they do?



UNIT # 7: I'M SO SORRY. IT WAS MY BAD! (IDIOMS FOR HAVING PROBLEMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and try to guess the meaning of the idioms in bold in the sentences on the next page. Underline the correct definition.





1. The manager **gave me a hard time** since I came late for yesterday's meeting.

Definition:

to treat someone in a bad way *to have no time*

2. He makes many excuses, but in the end, we are all **in the same boat**.

Definition:

in a related condition *in a similar unpleasant situation*

3. What are you going to do? You lost your boyfriend's car keys! You're **toast!!!**

Definition:

to be hot *to be in trouble*

4. Stop yelling at me. Are you **asking for trouble?**

Definition:

to do something that will cause trouble *to insult someone*

5. There was a miscalculation with the last bills. Derek is **in over his head!**

Definition:

having difficulties that one can't manage. *To drown*

6. Mike was like **a fish out of water** when he stood in front of everyone to do karaoke. He has never sung in his entire life!

Definition:

not being able to breath *to be in an uncomfortable situation*

7. Mary's boyfriend is **in hot water!** She just caught him being too friendly with his ex.

Definition:

in trouble *to be caught in fraganti.*

8. It was **my bad**. So I'm going to apologize to him!

Definition:

assume a mistake *to do something bad*



B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? Read the following conversations to better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: *Two sisters, Gladys and Fanny, are arguing.*

Gladys: Fanny, I caught you! You came home at three o'clock in the morning from your boyfriend's party. You're **toast**₁! I'm gonna tell daddy.

Fanny: You wouldn't dare do that. Remember, we're **in the same boat**₂!

Gladys: What? In the same boat? What do you mean?

Fanny: Don't you remember that the other day you told dad that you were going to the library, but instead you went to your boyfriend's house?

Gladys: If you tell daddy that I lied, I will tell mom that you lost her favorite bracelet.

Fanny: Don't **ask for trouble**₃, Gladys. I know you've lied to dad many times. So stay quiet!!!

Gladys: Sorry, **my bad**₄. I won't say anything, but I was worried about you. It was too late, and you weren't coming.

Fanny: I'm sorry, too. I love you, Gladys.

Conversation 2: *Benny is a new employee in a company, and he is asking Jean for a favor since she is the only one in the company he gets along with.*

Benny: Hi, Jean! Would you mind helping me finish my statistical reports? I don't know how to represent the budgets!!!

Jean: Sorry. I'm too busy now. I'm **in over my head**₅ with the monthly expenses of the company. They don't match my accounts, and the quantity of money is too big.

Benny: Oh, no! You're the only one who can help me. You know that I feel like **a fish out of water**₆ here.

Jean: I'd like to, but as I told you. I'm really busy. I'll be **in hot water**₇ if I don't solve this problem.

Benny: So will I if I don't finish these reports. The boss has been **giving me a hard time**₈ since morning, and he asked me to hand in them in two hours.

Jean: Ok, try to finish them yourself, and later we can check them together.

Benny: Thanks a lot. I will.



1. To be in deep trouble.
2. In the same uncomfortable situation.
3. To do something that will cause problems.
4. To recognize one's mistake.
5. To have problems that cannot be handled.
6. Someone who feels uncomfortable with a particular situation.
7. In trouble.
8. To cause difficulties for someone or make someone feel bad about something.

C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOM	EXPLANATION
To ask for trouble	<p>This is a phrase that acts as a verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't ask for trouble, Gladys. I know you've lied to dad many times. <p>More examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop talking nonsense! I think you're asking for trouble. - Martin is asking for trouble by plagiarizing his essay about wild animals. The teacher will definitely notice. - My brother asked for trouble when he entered my room without knocking first.
To give someone a hard time	<p>This expression functions as a verb. It has an object (a noun or an object pronoun) placed between "give" and "hard." For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The boss has been giving me a hard time since morning. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The manager has been giving Lucy a hard time since she didn't give him the monthly reports.



Fish out of water	<p>This idiom acts as a noun. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You know that I feel like a fish out of water here. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I felt like a fish out of water at the last night party. I was the only one not dressed like a punk.
In hot water	<p>This saying functions as a noun. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I'll be in hot water if I don't solve this problem. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mary is in hot water! The boss just saw her arriving thirty minutes late!
In over one's head	<p>This expression goes after the verb to be. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I'm in over my head with the monthly company's reports. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sully doesn't know how to do her math homework. She missed a lesson, and now she is in over my head.
My bad	<p>This phrase is used as a whole. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sorry, my bad. I won't say anything <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My mother realized I lied to her. She was so disappointed. The only thing I could say was "my bad".
To be in the same boat	<p>This idiom functions as a verb. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You wouldn't dare do that. Remember, we're in the same boat! <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I took my dad's car without permission, but my sister did the same thing. Now, we're in the same boat.
To be toast	<p>It is used as a verb. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You're toast! I'm gonna tell daddy.



	Another example: - Willy learned that his girlfriend was cheating on him. She's toast
--	---

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Complete the following statements by using the expressions in the box below. Conjugate the idioms that function as a verb if necessary:

to ask for trouble to give someone a hard time fish out of water

in hot water in over one's head to be toast

to be in the same boat "my bad"

- I felt so sad when my mom noticed I was drunk. The only thing I could say was _____.
- Since the day I got home late, my parents have been _____.
- My sister left her business school. She said she felt like _____. Now, she is going to study Art.
- I said to my parents that I was going to do my homework at Leslie's house. But they saw me with my boyfriend. I don't want to go home. I _____.
- That dog looks unfriendly. Look at it. He won't stop barking and you want to touch him? Don't _____!
- Ulysses and Walter are _____. They are the only new students in the class.
- Some money was stolen from Karla's bag, and she thinks her maid took it. Her poor maid is _____.
- It's impossible to do this homework. I missed a class, and I have to finish this assignment for tomorrow. I am _____.



E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

You know the answer, but what is the question? Tick the appropriate question for each one of these answers:

ANSWERS	QUESTIONS
Yes, she is too irresponsible. I think she is in hot water. My parents will be furious!	<input type="checkbox"/> Did you say your sister left school? <input type="checkbox"/> Did your sister notice about the test? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your sister taking the final?
Yeah, I heard about it. He always asks for trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/> Alan is sad, is he having problems at school? <input type="checkbox"/> Alan never does his homework. Has his teacher talked to his parents? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you know Alan was about to fight with Eric? Eric is much taller and stronger than him...!
Well, she asked me to do it. Now, unfortunately, we are in the same boat. The teacher's really angry	<input type="checkbox"/> It is true that Nicole asked you to copy her homework? <input type="checkbox"/> It is true that Nicole and you were cheating on the test? <input type="checkbox"/> Are Nicole and you going to ask your teacher for another chance to present the project?
No I couldn't. that's why my boss is giving me a hard time	<input type="checkbox"/> You were late today. Did you miss your bus? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you finish the annual reports? They were due today. <input type="checkbox"/> Could you take this document to the manager's office?
No way! I think it is in over my head. I am not good at science.	<input type="checkbox"/> Were you able to develop the Science project? The teacher gave us some advice to do it <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been working on



	<p>your science project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are you going to participate in the English open house?</p>
<p>No, I haven't. When I am with them, I feel like a fish out of water</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Did you go on the school trip with your little sisters?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have you gone out with new British classmates? Their culture is pretty different from ours.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Your friends are so kind. Don't you think so?</p>
<p>I don't know! I am in trouble. She is going to punish me. I am toast!</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I can't believe it. How could you lose your mother's gold ring?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does your mother know about your boyfriend?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Did your sister remember your birthday?</p>
<p>Of course! I tried to explain to her, but she didn't listen to me. In the end I just said "my bad."</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Could you talk to your teacher about your project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Did you apologize for forgetting Marlenes birthday?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Did you recognize your mistake in math class?</p>



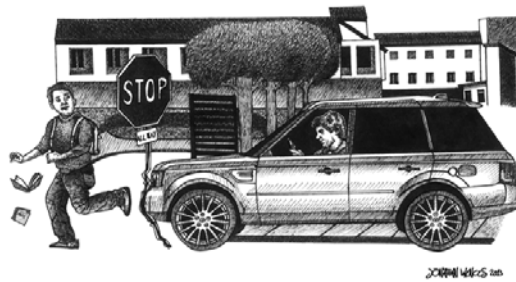
F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

What these pictures make you think about? Provide your answer using as many idioms from this unit as you can.

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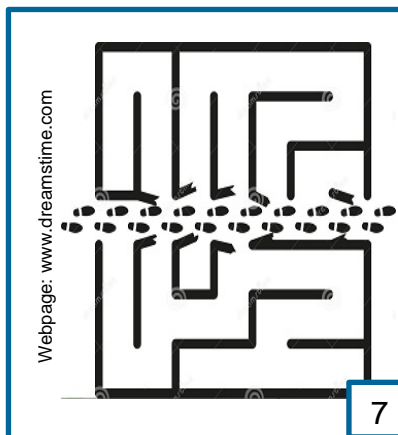
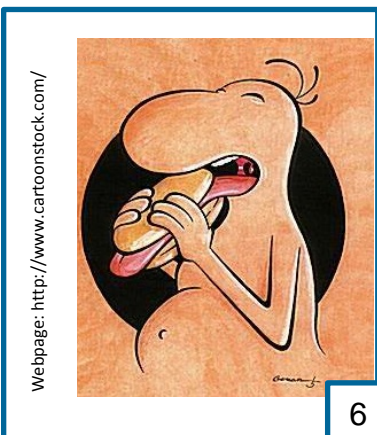
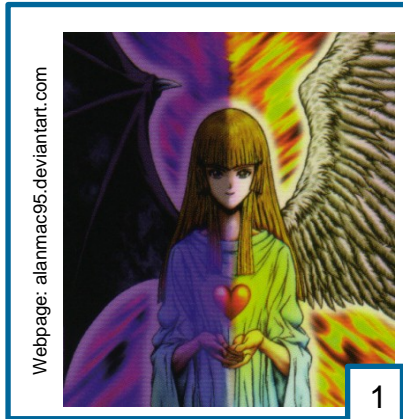




UNIT # 8: YOU SHOULD STOP TELLING WHITE LIES! (IDIOMS FOR GIVING ADVICE)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and try to guess the correct definitions of the idioms in bold. Check your answers.





1. Over time, people can experience **a change of heart**.
A change of heart means:
 - To change an opinion, or the way you feel about something.
 - To undergo heart surgery.

2. Do you have a problem? Tell me, I'm **all ears!!!**
All ears means:
 - To whisper something in someone's ear.
 - To listen carefully.

3. John **gave Sara a hand** when she was climbing up the mountain.
To give someone a hand means:
 - To help.
 - To shake hands.

4. David told Isabel that he thought her baby was cute. It was obviously a **white lie**.
White lie means:
 - A lie with a good intention.
 - Something that is half lie and half true.

5. Michael tried to **put himself in his wife's shoes** to understand why she was complaining.
Put in someone's shoes means:
 - To try to experience something from a different point of view.
 - To try out someone else's shoes.

6. Sometimes it's better to **bite one's tongue** than saying something that can hurt someone.
To bite one's tongue means:
 - To bite one's tongue on accident.
 - To not say something that you really want to say.

7. Alex always talks too much when he wants a favor. I think that it's better to **cut to the chase** and say what you intend to say.
Cut to the chase means:
 - To chase someone
 - To get to the point



8. Paul **came clean** during the trial. He want to be open and free of his problems.

Come clean means:

- To honestly confess all.
- To take a shower before going out

B) LET'S USE IDIOMS IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? Read the following conversations to help you better understand their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: *Leo and Ronald are best friends. Ronald has a problem, and Leo offers him advice.*

Leo: Hey Ronald! What's up?

Ronald: Hey Leo, I'm fine thanks. And you?

Leo: Uhmhhh. You don't seem to be fine. I've noticed that You've been spacing out at work. Is everything okay? You can tell me. I'm **all ears**₁.

Ronald: Thanks, that's why you're my best friend. You know me well.

Leo: Yeah, you can rely on me. Maybe I can help you.

Ronald: Well, it's my wife. Lately, she's been very distant from me. We no longer talk, and she is always busy doing chores.

Leo: Oh man! That isn't good. Communication is the base of a marriage. Do you **give her a hand**₂ at home?

Ronald: No way. I work all day; and when I get home, I wanna rest.

Leo: Sure, but she also works all day. And even more than you, since she continues working at home while you rest.

Ronald: But I feel tired when I get home.

Leo: You should **put yourself in her shoes**₃. Taking care of children can be exhausting.

Ronald: Yeah, I guess that's a good idea.

Leo: But the first thing you should do when you get home is to talk to her. Tell her how you feel and listen to her carefully even if she complains. And the most important thing is to **bite your tongue**₄ if you wanna talk back to her.

Ronald: Thanks for the advice, Leo. I really appreciate it.

Leo: I'm sure that when you talk to her and start helping her at home, she will have a **change of heart**₅. Good luck!!!

Conversation 2: *Vicky has a problem, and she goes to consult it with a lawyer.*

Vicky: Good afternoon, Mr. Johnson. My name is Vicky O'Connor, and I



would like to consult you about a trial that I have to attend as a witness.

Lawyer: Good afternoon, Vicky. Take a seat... Now, tell me, what happened?

Vicky: Well, I saw that my brother hit our neighbor's car. It was unintentionally, but he was drunk.

Lawyer: That's something that happens often, but tell me what do you want to do?

Vicky: Mr. Johnson, he is my brother! I'm on his side. What would happen if I tell a **white lie**₆ in front of the judge?

Lawyer: Everybody says that the best thing to do is **to come clean**₇ with the judge about what you have seen or done. But if you want to lie to save your brother, you should **cut to the chase**₈ and avoid details about the incident. So, you keep yourself from telling contradictory things.

Vicky: Thank you for your advice. I know what I have to do now.

1. To listen carefully to someone.
2. To help someone with something.
3. To try to understand someone from his or her point of view.
4. To stop yourself from saying something you really want to say.
5. A change of attitude or opinion.
6. A lie you tell to avoid hurting people or having problems.
7. To tell the truth.
8. To get to the point avoiding details.



C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOMS	BRIEF EXPLANATION
To cut to the chase	<p>This idiom acts as a verb. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You should cut to the chase and avoid details about the incident. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't waste time. Let's cut to the chase. Later we can arrange the details.
To come clean	<p>This phrase functions as a verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everybody says that the best thing to do is to come clean with the judge about what you have seen or done. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea wants her son to come clean with her about his grades.
To give someone a hand	<p>This expression is a verb. It needs an object (a noun or personal pronoun) between "give" and "a hand." Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you give her a hand at home? <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miriam! Give Ann a hand. She has a lot of chores to do.
Change of heart	<p>This saying acts as a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I'm sure that when you talk to her and start helping her at home, she will have a change of heart. <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I had a change of heart and decided to cancel the wedding. Everybody was telling me that he was a cheater!!! - Why don't you talk to Gabriel? He had a change of heart, and I'm sure he will come back.
To bite one's tongue	<p>This phrase is used as a verb. A possessive adjective is usually placed between "bite" and "tongue." For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bite your tongue if you wanna talk back to her.



	<p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Samuel thought his boss wasn't being fair, but he bit his tongue to avoid problems.
To put yourself in someone's shoes	<p>This expression functions as a verb. A reflexive pronoun is needed between "put" and "in." A possessive adjective or a proper noun goes between "in" and "shoes." Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You should put yourself in her shoes. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- If I put myself in Helena's shoes, I would have made the same decision.
All ears	<p>This idiom is used as a whole, and it is commonly placed after the verb to be. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You can tell me. I'm all ears. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My mom always realizes when I have problems. It's nice when she comes in my room and says, "Okay, I am all ears. Tell me what's going on."
White lie	<p>It functions as a noun. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What would happen if I tell a white lie in front of the judge? <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My friend invited me for dinner. When I tried the food, it tasted disgusting. Anyway, when she asked me about the food, I had to tell a white lie.



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Look for a mistake in each one of the following statements. Underline it and rewrite the sentence correctly.

a) You are talking too much. I think you should cut at the chase and start the meeting.

b) It would be better if you come clear and recognize your mistake. This situation affects the harmony in the office.

c) Our new neighbor has a lot of things to do. I think it would be nice to give him an arm.

d) Sally and Teresa didn't like each other until they met again at the college party. They talked about different things and had a change of head. Now, they are good friends.

e) Hernan was so angry and wanted to say so many things, but he didn't want to cause trouble; so he beat his tongue.

f) Men need to place themselves in women's shoes to know how it feels to be pregnant.

g) Blanca hates hearing her boyfriend say he is all eyes while he is using his cellphone.



- h) My sister bought an ugly dress, but she loves it. So when she asked me for my opinion, I had to tell her a black lie.

2. Look for the extra word in each one of the following statements.

cross it out and rewrite the sentence correctly.

- a. You should come down clean and tell her your reasons for not going to her party.

- b. I told my sister a white soft lie when she asked me about her new look.

- c. My father always said that it would be better to put yourself in to someone's shoes before criticizing him/her.

- d. My best friend is willing to talk to me whenever I have problems. She is always all ears up.

- e. When your parents are complaining about your behavior, it is better to bite your tongue out than talking back to them.

- f. My mom is angry with me because I came home late last night. When she is cleaning the house, I should give her from a hand with the chores; so, she'll be happy with me.



g. Noemi's parents were about to get divorced, but she decided to talk to them. In the end, they had a change of in heart.

h. I feel you are giving silly excuses, so please, cut with to the chase and tell me whatever is happening.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

People sometimes think one thing and say something else. Read their thoughts and what they say to decide if they are telling the truth or a lie.

How can she talk so much? I'll just make sounds like I'm listening to her, and I'll continue watching TV.

<input type="checkbox"/> Truth
<input type="checkbox"/> Lie

Oh, really? Did that happen? Ohhh... Yeah... of course, I'm listening! I'm **all ears!!!**



I can't stand people who can't do their job! Why do they always want me to explain everything to them? It's just a waste of time. They won't understand!!!

- Truth
- Lie

I'm glad to **give you a hand**! If you don't understand something, just tell me. Ok? I have all the time in the world to explain to you how this program works.

The burglars entered your house because you forgot to lock the door... you should confess to your parents the truth even if they are going to punish you severely.

- Truth
- Lie

Well, I think you should **come clean** with your parents about forgetting to lock the door. It's better to tell the truth.



I wish she were more straightforward. I don't need to listen to so many details to understand the situation.

- Truth
- Lie

Lila, I want you to **cut to the chase** and tell me what is going on?

Rachel always complains about her mother's decisions. I wish she **put herself in her mother's shoes** to understand her situation.

- Truth
- Lie

Rachel, you're right! I don't understand how your mom can be so unfair. It's better if you don't talk to her for a while.

Darwin already knows that you weren't with me. He hates liars more than cheaters, so I'm sure he will break up with you if you lie to him!

- Truth
- Lie

White lies don't hurt anybody. On the contrary, they are good because they make people feel better. Tell Darwin you were with me, so he won't find out that you cheated on him



The secretary hates critics. So, it's better to keep your mouth shut and have patience.

- Truth
- Lie

Bite your tongue if you're going to complain to the secretary about her service. If you don't, she'll never help you again.

I heard Hugh had a change of heart after seeing his sister being played by her boyfriend. I'm sure he'll respect his new girlfriend now.

- Truth
- Lie

I advise you not to approach Hugh. He is a womanizer that only plays with women's hearts.



F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Read the following situations. Provide advice by using the idioms learnt in this unit.

Paul judges Ann because he doesn't know the reasons behind her decision. What would you say to him?

When Betty wants to tell someone something, she starts to mention all the details, and she talks too much. What should she do?

Klein decided to break up with his girlfriend, but she wants an explanation. She is having a difficult time. What would you say to him?



Thomas sees his neighbor carrying a lot of bags from the grocery store. They seem heavy. What should he do?

Esteban doesn't stay quiet. He always gives his opinion when he doesn't agree with somebody, but it's very annoying for his friends and classmates. What should he do?

William feels bad about stealing a wallet from someone. He wants to know what to do. What would you say?



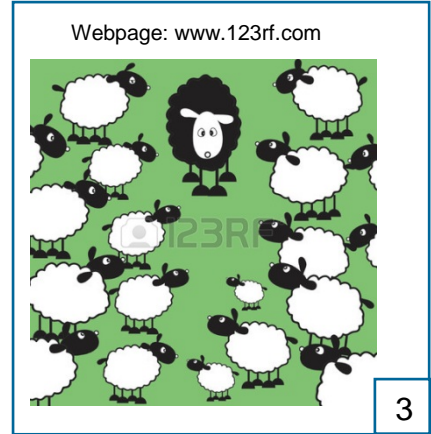
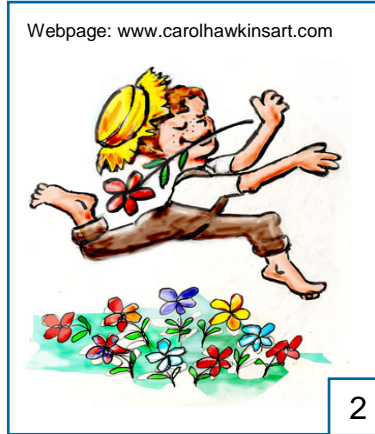
Victor's parents are always worried about other things, and they don't pay attention to him when he needs to tell them something. What should they do?

Greta doesn't like seafood, but she doesn't want to be impolite. What should she say?

UNIT # 9: I'M THE BLACK SHEEP OF MY FAMILY (IDIOMS FOR DESCRIBING PEOPLE'S PERSONALITY)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Try to guess the meaning of the new idioms by using the pictures below.
Then match the sentences with the meaning of the idioms.





____ 1. I can't stand Adrian! He's always bothering me. He is **such a pain in the neck!!!**

____ 2. I like that Henry is a **happy-go-lucky** kind of a person, but sometimes I would want him to be more concerned about life.

____ 3. Malcolm is considered the **black sheep** of his family just because he decided not to follow in his father's footsteps

____ 4. The boss likes **go-getters** people like Eren. He always has ideas and carries them out.

____ 5. Ethan and I told Adam, the **down-to-earth** person from our group of friends, our idea about dropping out of school to dedicate ourselves to music. He almost fainted.

____ 6. After Caesar refused to compete to see who was the best at skating, everybody told him that he was a **chicken**.

____ 7. Meredith is like the **girl next door**. She is pretty, nice, and sensible, but she is just a friend.

____ 8. George knows he is an **average Joe** for Kate, even so he has decided to ask her out.

- a. An easygoing person
- b. A normal guy or person
- c. A sweet-natured, nice woman
- d. A practical person
- e. A coward
- f. An enterprising person
- g. A person who is considered as a failure or disgrace by the family.
- h. An annoying person



B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Read the following conversations to understand better the meaning of the idioms of this unit and the context in which they are used.

Conversation 1: *Renata and Cristina are having a small talk at a cafeteria.*

Renata: Cristina, you look great! What are you doing?

Cristina: Oh, thanks. Maybe it's because I'm in love.

Renata: Really? Good for you. But tell me, what does he look like?

Cristina: For me, he is very handsome, but what I really like about him is his personality. He is a **happy-go-lucky**₁ kind of a guy.

Renata: Oh, I remember your ex-boyfriend was really strict. You felt stressed when you were with him.

Cristina: LOL. And not only that! He **was** such a **chicken**₂. Do you remember that he was afraid of mice? He couldn't see them without screaming.

Renata: That was funny. Everybody laughed at him.

Cristina: By the way, do you know Grace's boyfriend?

Renata: Yeah, I just met him last week. He is an **average Joe**₃ for me.

Cristina: Hmm when I met him, he behaved in a really annoying way. He was always complaining about everything. Everybody thought he was a **pain in the neck**₄.

Renata: Oh, really? I can't imagine that. He looked like a nice person to me.

Cristina: Well, he didn't give me that impression, but maybe he was in a bad mood.

Renata: That's right. First impressions are important, but it's better not to judge people only on what we first think of them.

Conversation 2: *Frederick and Johnny are talking about Johnny's major.*

Frederick: Hey, Johnny. How are you doing? Are you about to get your degree as a physician's assistant?

Johnny: I'm not studying to be a physician. I'm about to be a lawyer.

Frederick: No way! But your family owns a medical clinic, and all of them are physicians. I thought that you were on the same path!

Johnny: well, I decided my profession on my own, and that's why I'm considered the **black sheep**₅ of the family.

Frederick: Your life, your decisions. That's a good thing.

Johnny: And not only that! I decided to open my own office with Isabella. Do you remember her?

Frederick: Isabella? **The girl next door**₆?

Johnny: Exactly! She is a **down-to earth**₇ person, and I know that I can



rely on her.

Frederick: Congrats! I'm glad for you. I know you're a **go-getter**,
and everything you plan, you can achieve.

1. An easygoing person.
2. A coward.
3. A common guy.
4. A bothersome person.
5. Someone who is rebellious.
6. An ordinary woman.
7. A realistic person
8. An ambitious, enterprising person

C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how the idioms are used.

IDIOMS	EXPLANATION
Girl next door	<p>This phrase has a double function: as an adjective and as a noun. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isabella? The girl next door? <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My mother introduced me Sofia. she is like a girl next door.
To be a chicken	<p>This expression is used as a verb, but if just the word chicken is used, it acts as an adjective. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - !!! He was such a chicken. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diego challenged Martin to leave the class without permission. Martin didn't accept it, and now he is the chicken of the class.
	<p>This idiom functions as a noun. For instance:</p>



Black sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I decided my profession on my own, and that's why I'm considered the black sheep of the family. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Freddy failed Math class, and now his family considers him the black sheep of the family.
Pain in the neck	This saying is a noun. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He was always complaining about everything. Everybody thought he was a pain in the neck. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Elisa is such a pain in the neck. She always asks for help and bugs you if you can't help her.
Happy-go-lucky	This expression is an adjective. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He is a happy-go-lucky kind of a guy. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I like Angel's personality. She is such a happy-go-lucky kind of a person.
Average joe	This idioms is a noun. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He is an average Joe for me. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have met Nancy's boyfriend. I expected he is really handsome. But in my opinion, he is an average Joe.
Down-to-earth	This phrase is an adjective. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- She is a down-to earth person, and I know that I can rely on her. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Daniel knows he has no chance of dating Karla. He is a down-to-



	earth person
Go-getter	<p>It is an idiom that functions as a noun. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I know you're a go-getter, and everything you plan, you can achieve. <p>Another example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company requires go-getters to work in the marketing department.

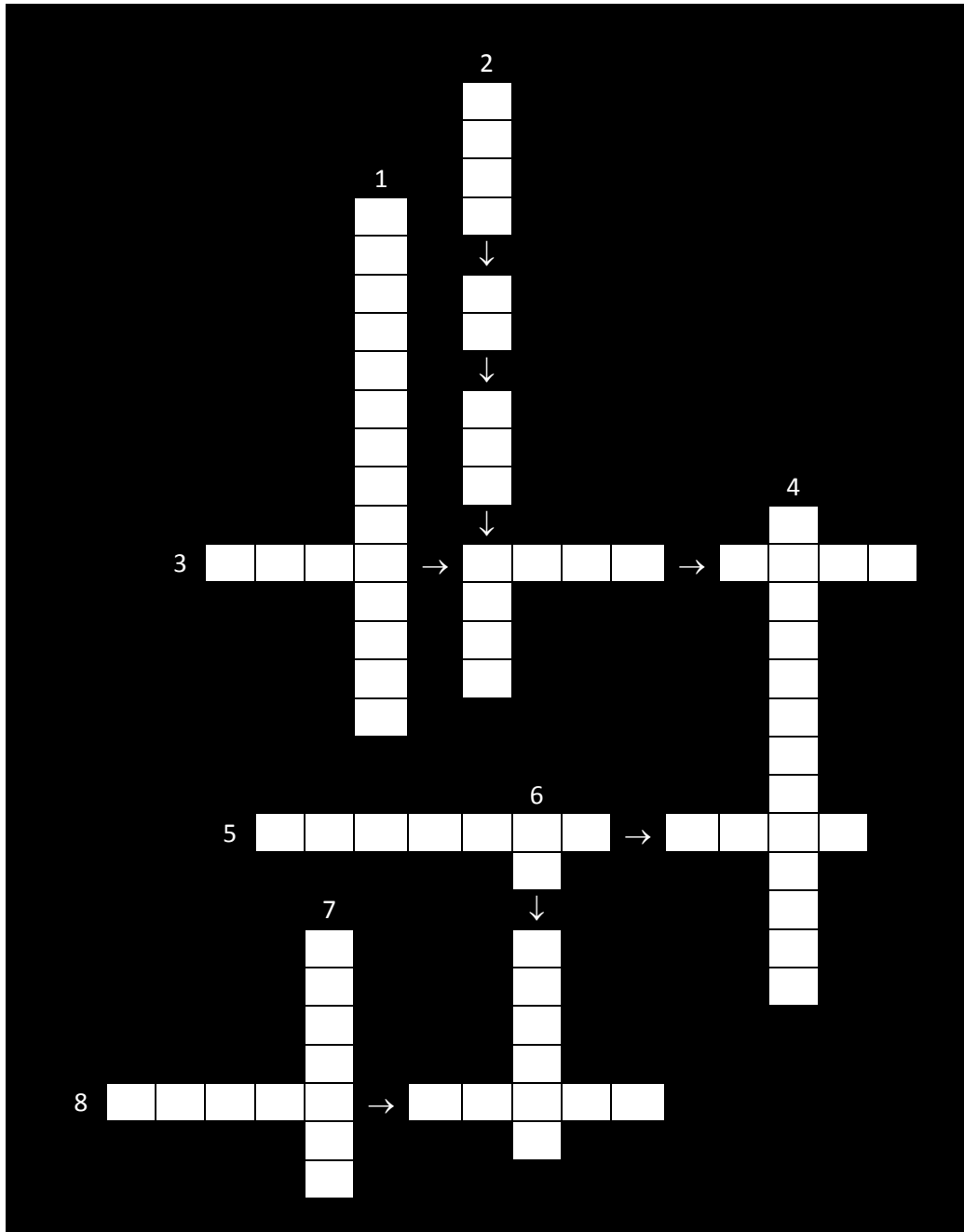
D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Circle the phrase that best completes the following statements:

- a) German's personality is unique. He is really a (happy-go-lucky / dreamer / wealthy) boy.
- b) Kelvin is considered an (crush / average Joe / partner) by Helen; anyway, she decided to give him a chance.
- c) Galo is a (down-to-earth / ambitious / intelligent) person. He knows it's difficult for him to travel to the USA
- d) Some people judge Lucas because they can't understand how such a young man has been able to be so successful. But he has always been a (thief / day dreamer / go-getter)
- e) We couldn't believe when that girl was crowned the queen of the city. For us, she was just (the girl next door / not smart / popular).
- f) At the last moment, Fabian decided not to go bungee jumping. Everybody said he was a (chicken / scared / worried)
- g) Everybody was shocked when they knew that Pablo decided to be a teacher instead a lawyer like his parents. That's why he was considered the (nerd / black sheep / most loved person) of the family.
- h) I can't stand my younger brother. He takes my things without my permission, and sometimes he loses them He is a (playful boy / lovely baby / pain in the neck)



2. Complete the sentences with the right idioms according to the context. Then solve the crossword





DOWN:

1. Marian is so strict that she can't stand working with _____ people.
2. My new neighbor is a _____. He has parties every weekends, that end at 5am.
4. This project needs to be directed by a _____ person. The Company doesn't need unviable ideas.
6. I told my interviewer that one of my strengths is that I'm a _____.
After he heard this, he started to treat me like an equal.
7. Darian scared me by showing me a spider. For me, it looked like a tarantula. Now, I'm considered the _____ of the group.

ACROSS

3. Annie is so sweet and kind to everybody. She is the _____ all people want to talk to.
5. Mina has dated six _____, and she is tired now. She is looking for a handsome, successful man.
8. Being considered the _____ of the family isn't bad since you can behave really badly and your family isn't surprised.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Work in pairs. Student A is going to ask some questions. Student B is going to use the suggested word(s) to come up with the answers.

PERSON A	PERSON B
1. Have you met Ricky's girlfriend? What does she look like?	Well... (use: girl next door)
2. I know you went to do parachuting. Did Sebastian do it?	No way!... (use be a chicken)
3. Did you know that Joseph had problems with his family since he	Yeah... (use: black sheep)



decided to stop studying his major?	
4. Victoria said she can't stand her little brother. I don't know why. Do you know him?	Oh yes!... (use: pain in the neck)
5. I like Ion!! He is always happy, and he has a smile. Have you noticed it?	You are right... (use: happy-go-lucky)
6. Everybody talks about the new teacher. I don't know him yet. Do you?	Yes... (use: average joe)
7. Reina told me that Roman decided to stop seeing her. She wouldn't give him any opportunity. He isn't her type. Don't you think Roman made a good decision?	For sure... (use: down-to-earth)
8. The enterprise didn't hire Thomas. Do you know what kind of profile they were looking for?	Definitely... (use: go-getter)

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

There are always people who have a particular personality. They can be the doorman, the principal, a dear classmate, anyone. In this section, you are going to describe people from your high school or university. Use at least 5 idioms you learned in this unit.

Follow this example:

I remember the doorman at my high school. He was a real pain in the neck. When I was late for classes, he always closed the door on me. Although I begged and begged him to let me in, his answer was usually, "no!!"



UNIT #10: IT'S STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET (IDIOMS FOR EXPENSES)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences on the next page. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess the meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the following statements:



Webpage: fathatnews.com



Webpage: www.ign.com



Webpage: www.shutterstock.com/



Webpage: depositphotos.com



Webpage: www.123rf.com



Webpage: www.macijams.com



pendleto panther.wordpress.com



Webpage: www.languageties.com



1. My father is in charge of **bringing home the bacon**. He never complains about it.
2. Vincent is not too happy when he has to pay for something. He's a **cheapskate**.
3. Yesterday, Jasmine went shopping. Somebody told her the products were **dirt cheap**.
4. Christian has a big family and he is thinking about getting another job **to make ends meet**. He is always worried about paying the bills.
5. The director of the school owns two cars and a really big house. It seems he has **money to burn**.
6. Teddy got a **bang for the buck** with the new car he bought.
7. I think my studies will cost me a **pretty penny**, so I need to start saving money.
8. I can't stand Mario!! He is **well off**, and he likes to show people all the nice things he has.

B) LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE

Did you get the meaning of the idioms? Read the following conversations to understand better their meaning and context.

Conversation 1: *Mr. and Ms. Spencer are arguing about their expenses:*

Adele: Timothy, did you buy that PSP4 even when I told you not to? Do you think we **have money to burn**₁?

Timothy: Oh, come on! I **bring home the bacon**₂. It's my money, so I decide what to do with it!!!

Adele: You're right. You're the one who makes money, but it doesn't mean you can waste it on useless things. I was counting on that money to pay the rent. Remember, we still haven't paid last month's rent .

Timothy: I already know that! But even with my whole salary, it's hard for me to **make ends meet**₃. And for the record, I got the PSP4 for **dirt cheap**₄. It is second hand PSP.

Adele: Maybe I exaggerated this situation. I'm sorry. Now's not the time to argue, I want you to celebrate with me because I got a job, and now I'll have money to help you pay for expenses.

Timothy: That's good news!!! Congrats! We need to celebrate. Open the champagne!

Conversation 2: *Phillip and Jack are talking about their neighborhood when suddenly, a car passed by and...*

Phillip: Did you see that red Ferrari? Wow, it's the car of my dreams.



Jack: Oh, yeah. It's beautiful. Its owner is Derek.
 Philip: Derek? That **cheapskate**⁵! But he hates spending money. How could he buy such a car?
 Jack: You know he is **well-off**⁶, so he can afford to buy whatever he wants.
 Philip: Yeah, that car should have cost him a **pretty penny**⁷! It is brand new!
 Jack: No, I heard he got a real **bang for the buck**⁸ on it. After all, he knows how to do business.

1. To waste money buying unnecessary things.
2. To earn a salary.
3. To get and spend the same amount of money.
4. Extremely cheap
5. A stingy person
6. A rich person
7. Very expensive
8. Value for the money spent

C) LET'S FOCUS

Take a closer look at how idioms are used.

IDIOMS	EXPLANATION
Bang for the buck	This idiom functions as a noun. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I heard he got a real bang for the buck on it. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ross got a bang for the buck going to a second hand place to buy a motorcycle. He paid almost 60% off!
	This expression acts as a verb. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - But even with my whole salary, it's hard for me to make ends



To make ends meet	meet. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lionel and his wife work all day to make ends meet. If one of them doesn't go to work for even a day, they won't have enough money to pay their bills.
To bring home the bacon	This saying acts as a verb. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I bring home the bacon. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Freddy always complains that he is the only one who brings home the bacon. I understand him since he has two twenty-year-old sons who don't do anything.
Dirt cheap	It is an adjective. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I got the PSP4 for dirt cheap. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I bought a new dress for the next party. It was so dirt cheap that I had enough money to buy a pair of heels to match it.
To have money to burn	This expression functions as a verb. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you think we have money to burn? Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tatiana's parents seem to have money to burn. They change of cars very often
Pretty penny	This idiom is used a noun. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- That car should have cost him a pretty penny. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hilda's new car is great. I think it cost her a pretty penny.
	It is a noun. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Derek? That cheapskate! But he



Cheapskate	hates spending money. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- My neighbor is considered a cheapskate. Despite, the fact that he is well off, he never contributes to the neighborhood expenses.
Well-off	This phrase is used as an adjective. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You know he is well-off, so he can afford to buy whatever he wants. Another example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rachel is well-off. That's why she never thinks twice when it comes to helping others.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Idioms are used in the following sentences. Rewrite the statements by replacing the idioms with Standard English without losing the meaning of the sentences:

a) My parents have asked me to bring home the bacon. I should start looking for a job.

b) I think you must buy more of this product. It's dirt cheap. Take advantage of it!!

c) My father says he needs another job to make ends meet.

d) I am really happy. I got a bang for the buck on this new video game.

e) When I want to buy something I don't really need, my mom always asks me, "do you have money to burn?"

f) I love Mercy's dress. It must be authentic silk. But I'm sure it cost a pretty penny.



g) Don't be a cheapskate!! You should contribute money, so we can buy it. It will be for everyone in the house, including you!!

h) Our new neighbor seems to be well-off. Just, look at his car, his house, and his clothes!!

2. Complete the sentences by finding the idioms in the puzzle. The words of the idioms have no space in the puzzle. For example: "dirtcheap"

R	O	Q	F	E	R	T	I	P	A	P	R	E	T	R	E	G	A	B	R	C	E	O	P
U	F	D	I	R	T	C	H	E	A	P	G	H	R	E	C	A	Q	W	A	R	T	I	A
I	L	I	A	M	A	K	E	N	D	R	T	R	Y	A	G	A	J	N	T	R	P	N	N
I	K	T	E	B	L	L	M	E	C	E	A	U	S	E	H	U	R	E	S	E	Y	T	O
E	J	O	B	R	I	N	J	C	R	T	Y	U	A	C	O	W	M	E	W	S	A	L	B
U	J	V	N	I	Y	S	T	H	E	T	A	K	S	P	A	E	H	C	H	O	N	I	U
H	P	R	E	N	U	O	S	E	N	Y	S	T	U	A	V	L	W	J	F	M	D	G	K
G	O	U	E	G	K	R	U	A	O	P	O	S	G	V	E	L	Q	E	W	E	T	E	C
G	I	N	T	H	U	A	K	R	N	E	R	U	E	K	T	O	A	R	E	E	I	A	Y
H	E	C	E	O	H	S	A	S	O	N	A	K	E	L	A	F	Q	O	E	L	S	H	O
T	R	O	D	M	A	E	O	C	D	N	B	A	A	N	G	F	A	M	L	E	K	A	B
R	A	N	S	E	N	I	C	A	R	Y	U	S	O	M	E	B	S	O	D	F	A	H	A
E	X	B	N	T	A	S	H	T	A	U	U	E	S	L	E	D	L	I	F	T	T	L	R
C	A	A	R	H	O	A	I	E	M	I	K	E	M	O	N	A	N	A	R	H	A	R	U
H	D	N	O	E	N	K	T	G	E	T	C	U	S	E	F	Y	U	Y	N	K	A	A	W
E	W	J	F	B	A	N	G	F	O	R	T	H	E	B	U	C	K	R	E	T	K	C	E
A	Q	E	W	A	J	U	W	R	O	N	G	K	G	R	A	N	T	E	D	H	E	O	A
Q	A	R	E	C	I	N	H	W	E	M	A	K	E	C	O	P	T	A	E	N	L	M	R
W	Q	O	L	O	H	I	A	A	V	M	U	S	E	B	L	Y	U	M	E	I	I	P	E
E	W	M	O	N	E	Y	T	O	B	U	R	N	A	M	E	H	E	B	U	S	T	L	P
R	N	T	F	A	K	Q	B	R	I	N	B	R	U	N	O	N	T	U	L	F	A	I	R
H	O	H	F	O	A	R	K	I	K	O	E	R	U	H	O	W	T	Q	R	A	L	C	E
J	M	E	R	I	R	M	A	M	O	R	A	B	I	T	T	E	O	H	W	D	K	E	T

a. I love the way my best friend dresses. She told me she goes to an outlet mall and gets clothes for _____!!!



- b. Nico's new house is big, and it has an enormous yard. I bet it cost him a _____.
- c. Mercy couldn't believe how her husband spent a month's salary at a casino. She thought that he definitely has _____.
- d. Meredith wishes she were a _____ person. In that way, she wouldn't have to work so hard to _____.
- e. Lucas is such a _____! He doesn't even like to pay for the food he eats!!!
- f. I'm the head of the house since I'm the person who _____.
- g. I got a _____ on the last trip I took. I bought all the souvenirs in a duty-free shop.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Complete the following story by using the idioms learned in this unit:

In my neighborhood, there was a couple that looked as if they were happy. The man was the one who _____. His wife stayed at home taking care of their children. Once I met the wife at the mall. She was buying some clothes, and she picked ones that seemed to cost a _____. I thought that this couple was _____, so it was easy for them to spend the money they wanted. When I got home, I saw the couple arguing in the middle of the street. The man was really angry, and... ops! I heard him accidentally cry out, "do you think we _____." While she cried, she called him a _____ because he didn't like spending money on things she needed. Then he answered that he had to work extra hours to _____, and that there were priorities for spending money. The woman was sorry for having bought the expensive clothes and decided to sell them. Nobody wanted to pay her the real price, so she didn't get any _____. But the amount of money she received helped them with the house expenses. Since that time, the couple lived more quietly, though she continued going to the mall. However, she was aware of the prices. She bought products that are _____.

F) NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

You are the man of the house and earn an amount of money equivalent to two basic salaries. You have to administer that money to make ends meet without getting into debt. You know that the basic expenses in a house are:

- Rent



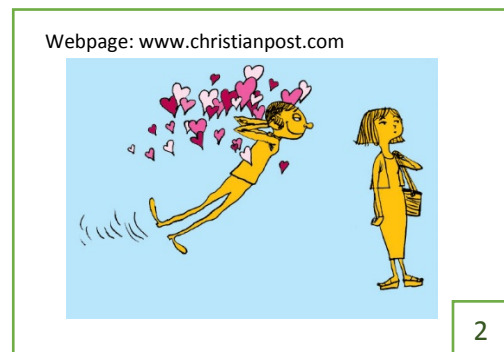
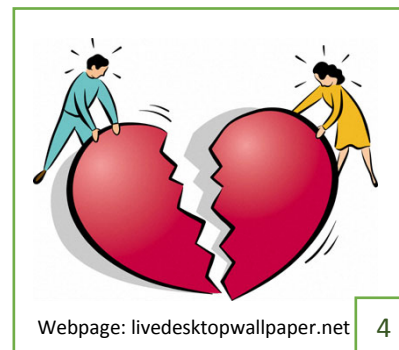
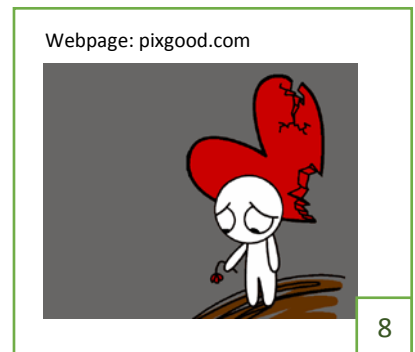
ANSWER SHEETS

UNIT #1: IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!!!

(LOVE IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences below them. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess their meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the statements.



1. He always winks at me. I think he is **hitting on** me.



2. When I saw her on the street, I immediately fell in love. It was a **love at first sight**.
3. Going to the movies is a must on first dates. I want to **ask** her **out** to the movies.
4. We decided to **break up** because we were always arguing.
5. I found out my husband was **having an affair** with his secretary.
6. I can't stop thinking about my neighbor. I think I **have a crush on** him.
7. Mary told me that she is **cheating on** her boyfriend with her friend.
8. She **broke my heart** when she told me that she no longer loved me.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Translate the dialogue from section B into Standard English

Ann and Rose are talking about their sentimental lives.

Ann: Hi, Rose. How are you doing?

Rose: Hi! It's been ages since the last time we saw each other. I'm doing fine, and you?

Ann: You know, I'm great!!! I just had lunch with John.

Rose: Oh! John? The guy you are attracted romantically to since we entered college?

Ann: Yeah, him. Actually, he invited me on a date last weekend.

Rose: Wow!!! Congrats! I guess falling in love with someone from the first time you see him really works! LOL

Ann: Well, I wanted him to notice me, so I decided to flirt with him.

Rose: I'm happy for you. I know how much you liked him from the very beginning.

Ann: And what about you? How is Andrew?

Rose: Uhm, I don't know. I haven't seen him for months.

Ann: What? What happened?

Rose: I found out he was being unfaithful. It was really hard...

Ann: No way! He loved you so much! Are you sure he was cheating on you?

Rose: Pretty sure he was having a passionate relationship with another woman because his mistress came to my workplace. It made me feel very disappointed.

Ann: What? Did she do that? And what did you do?

Mayra Nataly Campoverde Villavicencio
María José Carpio Cevallos



Rose: I was in shock! I did nothing, but later I decided to finish our relationship.

2. Correct the mistakes in the following statements:

1. Grace is really sad. Her boyfriend broke up with her.
2. Nobody could imagine that our boss had had an affair with his assistant.
3. Betty already told us that she has a crush on our English teacher.
4. I was surprised when Mau asked me out, but I really was pleased.
5. My mother said she fell in love with my dad immediately after seeing him. It was love at first sight.
6. Mary was really angry. She said that a girl was hitting on his boyfriend.
7. I don't know what to do! I saw Ryan with another girl, and I should tell Monique he is cheating on her.
8. When you start a new relationship, you are afraid about your new partner breaks your heart.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Read the short dialogues and decide whether the idiom used makes sense or doesn't make sense. Circle the correct answer.

- My heart started beating really fast when I saw Mary for the first time.
- It must have been love at first sight.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I can't stand Michael. He is such a jerk.
- I think you have a crush on him.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Andrew invited me to watch a movie with him.
- What? Did he ask you out?

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Peter hasn't spoken to me since last week.
- I'm sure he's hitting on you.



Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I am so happy!
- I know. Your boyfriend has been cheating on you.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- My boyfriend is having an affair.
- Don't cry. He doesn't deserve you.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- I feel like my girlfriend no longer loves me.
- You should break up with her.

Makes sense / doesn't make sense

- Mike just broke my heart.
- Let's celebrate!

Makes sense / doesn't make sense



UNIT # 2: YOU LOOK GREAT!!! YOU ARE IN GOOD SHAPE. (HEALTH IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures and the statements on the following page, try to guess whether the definitions of the idioms in bold are true or false.





1. Mark went to the doctor. He needed a **checkup**.

Definition: vaccine

False

2. After Daniel drank too much, I realized he was **out cold**.

Definition: to be fainted

True

3. For their New Year's resolution, many people decide to go **on a diet**.

Definition: to eat unhealthy

False

4. I'm dizzy. I think I'm gonna **black out**.

Definition: to vomit

False

5. I didn't go to school because I **came down with** the flu.

Definition: to become ill

True

6. At Christmas, people usually **put on weight**.

Definition: to gain weight

True

7. I don't mind being **on medication**. I know it's for my own good.

Definition: taking medicine

True

8. Let's go to the gym. We need to be **in good shape** for the wedding.

Definition: beautiful

False



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Match each sentence with the given situation.

- (2) Ashley put on a lot of weight after her pregnancy.
- (7) I'm on medication.
- (5) My personal trainer says that working out isn't enough to lose pounds.
- (8) Eating healthy, drinking 8 glasses of water per day, and doing exercise are my secrets...
- (6) Brenda is having headaches constantly.
- (3) Mark couldn't go to her best friend's anniversary.
- (4) The student didn't have breakfast before coming to school.
- (1) The poor man was out cold for

- 9. Nobody could explain how a stone hit him on his head.
- 10. She needs to go to the gym and start dieting.
- 11. I heard he came down with a very bad cold.
- 12. She blacked out in the classroom just before Math class ended.
- 13. I must start being on a diet if I want to see results.
- 14. She should go to her doctor for a checkup.
- 15. I can't drink alcohol.
- 16. to be in good shape.

2. Read the following statements; then choose the right word from the box to complete them:

diet down good out
cold checkup put on

- 1. Our neighbor fell down and hit her head so hard that she was out cold for a long time.
- 2. I am in a special program to lose weight. The best thing about this is that I don't need to be on a diet.
- 3. I always say to Stephany she doesn't need to go to the gym since she is already in good shape.
- 4. I would like to earn my own money as easy as I put on weight.
- 5. When I am on medication, my mom has to phone me because I have problems with my memory.



6. Eli didn't appear at the party. Then somebody told us she came down with a terrible cold.
7. My grandmother was sick, so we decided to take her to the doctor for a checkup
8. Nelly is just recovering from surgery. In the beginning it was difficult for her; she was so weak that she could black out at any time.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

According to the answers, select the appropriate question.

The answer is:
Yeah, she's in good shape.

Mary has lost weight. She looks great. Have you seen her?

The answer is:
I don't think so. She is on a diet.

Should I invite Ashley to eat out for her birthday?

The answer is:
They put on weight.

What happens when people eat a lot of carbohydrates?

The answer is:
Yes, I'm already on medication.

I heard you weren't feeling well. Have you gone to the doctor yet?

The answer is:
I have no idea. I drank a lot, and I was out cold.

Do you remember what happened during the party?



The answer is:

Well, I'm doing my annual
checkup.

What are you doing here in the hospital?

The answer is:

Don't you know? He came
down with the flu, and he
has been hospitalized for
two days.

Do you know why Andrew didn't attend
classes today?

The answer is:

No, I almost blacked out.
Take me to the doctor,
please!!!

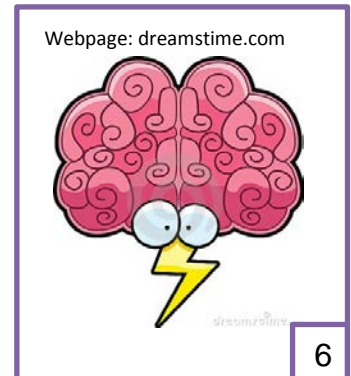
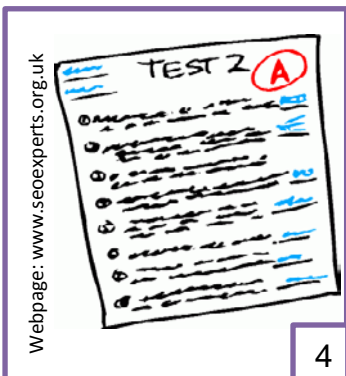
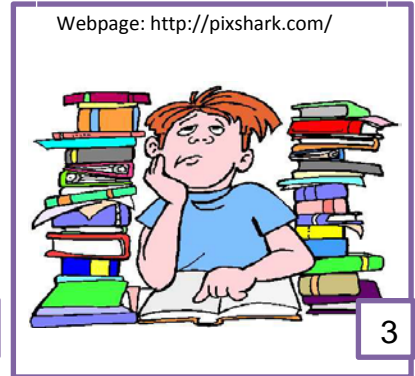
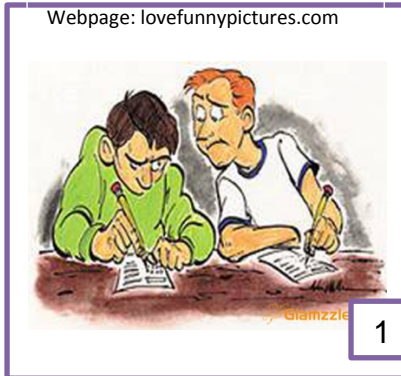
You look pale. Are you okay?



UNIT # 3: DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IS OUT OF QUESTION!!! (SCHOOL IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures, try to guess what the idioms mean. Underline the correct meaning.





1. Michael never studies and cheats on exams. He is such a **copycat!!!**
Copycat means: a cheater A lazy person
2. I studied since the beginning of the year. That's why I got **straight A's**.
Straight A's means: the highest grade a perfect grade
3. I haven't gone to school for two weeks. I have **to catch up on** my studies now!
Catch up means: to do what you haven't done to study
4. Dylan **aced** his Literature exam, and he didn't even study!!!
To ace means: to get an A to get average grades
5. I'm planning to give **a pop quiz** to my students. I want to know if they are learning.
A pop quiz means: a mid-term exam a surprise quiz
6. The teacher asked the students to **brainstorm** about the advantages and disadvantages of social media.
Brainstorm means: to give ideas about something to write a report
7. The students decided where to go on the school trip by **a show of hands**.
A show of hands means: to participate in class to raise hands to vote
8. I can't believe David **dropped out of school**. He was about to graduate!!!
To drop out of school means: to be absent to quit school



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Read the following phrases on the left, then match with the appropriate option from the right. Write down the corresponding letter on the line.

1. C Wendy hardly ever studies for her tests..
2. E I was worried for the final, so I studied hard for it.
3. A The 4th grade teacher asks his students to give ideas about any topic, so..
4. F I have only two weeks to catch up to my English lessons..
5. H We always have a pop quiz at the end of the class..
6. B The principal told Tom's teachers that he's not coming to class because he dropped out of school..
7. D Karla is a good student. She likes studying a lot, and..
8. G The students had to elect a person to represent the class, so the teacher proposed a show of hands..

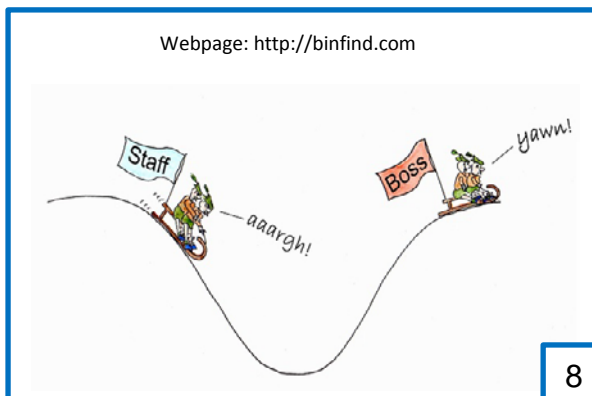
- A. they brainstorm, and it really works.
- B. they were surprised with this news. He was a good student, and they were sad to hear he wasn't returning.
- C. she always copies from her classmates. She is a copycat.
- D. she always gets straight A's.
- E. but it was worth it because I totally aced it.
- F. otherwise, I'll fail my English test.
- G. the majority supported Emily because she was a good student and everybody liked her.
- H. so we all pay attention during the whole lesson.



UNIT # 4: SALES HAVE FALLEN. IT'S TIME FOR A PLAN B! (BUSINESS IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences below them. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess their meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the sentences.





1. Darien **made a killing** by selling those new products. It is an incredible success!
2. Ian is **on a roll**. He is selling every item without refunds.
3. My father **started** his business **from scratch**. It is really admirable!
4. The new enterprise has **come a long way** since its beginning in 2000.
5. We need a **plan B**. Otherwise, we might go bankrupt.
6. I hate when salespeople start with their **hard sell**. I prefer to close the door.
7. Stop Joseph! This is a serious matter. **Get down to business** now.
8. Our boss is always **ahead of the curve**. That's why he makes a lot of money.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Fill in the blanks with the right phrase from the left:

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1	My father is a leader in his job. He always has a <u>plan B</u> to solve any problem.	to get down to business
2	Michael is working for an important enterprise. He is in charge of the management department, and he is <u>on a roll</u> .	ahead of the curve
3	The store wants to hire someone who always gives the <u>hard sell</u> They need to sell the merchandise before Christmas.	hard sell
4	When my older brother decided to start a business, my father said, "okay, I am going to support you, but you need to <u>get down to business</u> .	to make a killing
5	My best friend is a smart businesswoman, and she is always <u>ahead of the curve</u> . She knows how to control any difficulty. That's why she is so successful.	come a long way



6	The best business people have <u>started from scratch</u> and now their business allows other people to be part of them.	on a roll
7	I am very proud of my father because he has <u>come a long way</u> with his company. They are 30 years since he opened it.	started from scratch
8	Sarah is really happy!! She got a job which has a really good pay. She thinks she will <u>make a killing</u> in a short time	plan B

2. Rewrite the following statements by replacing the idioms with Standard English without losing the meaning of the sentences.

- a) It's hard to manage a business alone, but it's even harder to start it from the very beginning.
- b) Our company has been successful making money by selling some discontinued products. But it's not surprising! They were very famous back then in 1960.
- c) The boss should show up more often. If not, the employees won't get serious about what has to be done.
- d) The manager decided to implement an extra plan after losing too much money advertising the new product.
- e) Coca-Cola Company has improved over time since 1892.
- f) The manager learned to take preventive actions before having problems after having lost money in the last project.
- g) Charles puts all his effort in doing his job well. He has series of successes.
- h) The salesman started trying to convince me to buy something just after I came in the shop.



E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Decide whether the words in bold are correctly or incorrectly used in the following statements. Check the right box.

- a) The president of the enterprise is really smart. He is always **ahead of the curve**, and he knows how to act if there is any problem.

Right

- b) Unfortunately, this year the sales have decreased, so we have **made a killing**.

Wrong

- c) My family's business is not going great. We are **on a roll**. Things have to change!!

Wrong

- d) Good bosses need to have a **plan B** in order to make their employees succeed.

Right

- e) After my grandpa's business failed, his children decided to open it again and **to start from scratch**.

Right

- f) Once the new owners of the factory took over, they realized that the factory had not **come a long way**. Afterward, they decided to increase the employees' salaries.

Wrong

- g) A good seller doesn't often use the **hard sell**. That's why he / she sells a lot without too much effort.

Right

- h) When one decides to start a business, it is important to focus on organizing things and working hard. In other words, it is necessary to get down to business.

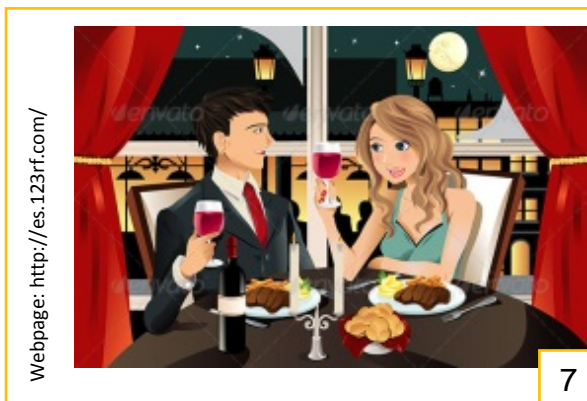
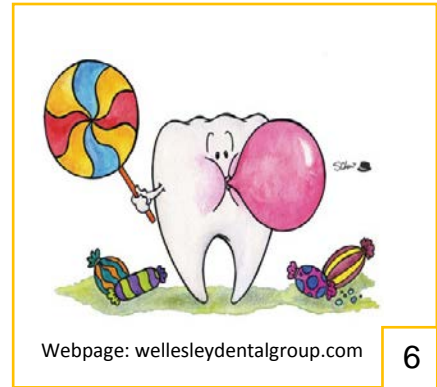
Right



UNIT # 5: I'M STARVING!!! LET'S GRAB A BITE (FOOD IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By reading the sentences and looking at the pictures, try to guess the meaning of the idioms by choosing one of the two options:





1. I need to **grab a bite** before going back to work.
To get something to eat
2. The ice cream is so good that it **melts in my mouth**.
To taste very delicious.
3. Gina is on a diet, but she shouldn't **skip** her meals.
To omit a meal.
4. The vet prohibited me from feeding my dogs with **leftovers**.
Remaining food.
5. I asked for a hamburger, but the French fries weren't complementary. I'm gonna ask for a **side of** them.
An extra order of something.
6. Rhonda eats at least five candy bars a day. Her **sweet tooth** is insatiable!
To love eating sweets.
7. Daniel asked me to **dine out** with him. It was the best night ever!!!
To eat in a restaurant.
8. You should try the new dessert. It's to **die for!!!**
To be extremely delicious.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. **Circle the phrase that better completes the following statements:**
 - a) I can't believe it!! Tom invited me to dine out for my birthday.
 - b) There are many of us in my family, so when we order food out, we usually ask for an extra side of rice.
 - c) I didn't know why I was starving. Then I remembered that I skipped lunch because I needed to finish my homework.
 - d) Danna surprised me!! Even though she loves eating, she was so full that she had leftovers from our lunch together. This has never happened!!
 - e) Before my classmates and I have to work on any assignment at home, we often grab a bite to give us some energy.
 - f) Have you noticed that grandmas prepare food that is to die for? I think it's a strategy to make us visit them more frequently.
 - g) Gina is crazy about desserts. She is such a sweet tooth. After having lunch, she always asks for something sweet.



h) When I arrive home after school, my mom is always preparing something delightful to eat that it melts in my mouth. I always look forward to eat.

2. The underlined words are written in Standard English. Rewrite them by using the idioms from this unit

- My crush invited me to dine out.
- I'm hungry! I need to grab a bite.
- My brother has always been sweet tooth.
- Some people think that by skipping a meal, they are gonna lose weight.
- My grandma prepares a delicious chocolate cake that is to die for.
- Let's ask for a side of nachos. There isn't enough!
- Keep the leftovers in the fridge. Don't waste it.
- This Oreo ice cream melts in my mouth. I want some more.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Complete the following story by using the idioms from this unit.

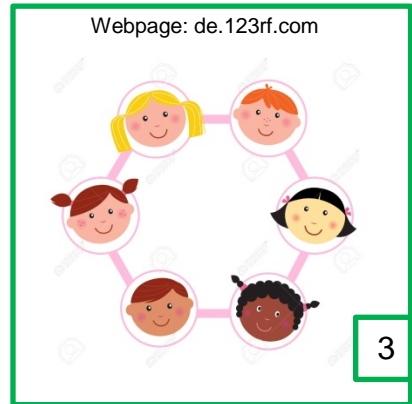
One day, after having been on a diet for two weeks, I decided to stop since I felt like I was starving!! That day I had skipped breakfast, and I just wanted grab a bite. I had heard about a restaurant where the food was to die for. So I decided to go there. When I was in that restaurant, I asked for rice with chicken and a side of salad. And as I am a sweet tooth, I also ordered a brownie. The food was excellent, but the brownie was the best thing I had tried!! I still remember its taste and it melts in my mouth. The same day, my boyfriend called and invited me to dine out. It might sound surprising, but we went to the same restaurant where I had been in the morning, and as I told you, the food was so delicious that it was impossible to have any leftovers.



UNIT # 6: WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE... TIME IS MONEY, MY FRIEND! (WORK IDIOMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

By looking at the pictures, try to guess whether the definitions of the idioms in bold are true or false in the statements on the next page.





1. It is necessary to look for a better leader in our group, our leader seems to be **asleep at the wheel**.

Definition: *sensitive*

False

2. Daniel **calls all the shots**, but in the end, he makes the best decisions.

Definition: *to give orders*

False

3. **“Put your heads together** and brainstorm ideas about what to do to beat the competition,” our CEO said.

Definition: *to share ideas in a group*

True

4. The supervisor always **keeps an eye on** me; I can't focus on what I'm doing.

Definition: *to monitor closely*

True

5. Everybody loves **coffee breaks**, but John is too anxious to have it that he counts the minutes.

Definition: *to drink coffee*

False

6. My job was so boring that **hanging it up** was the best decision I have made in years!

Definition: *to keep trying*

False

7. David has been making a lot of mistakes lately; he's been **spacing out** at work.

Definition: *to focus on what you have to do*

False

8. I need a new proposal for tomorrow morning. I won't accept excuses. **Time is money!!!**

Definition: *time is valuable*

True



D) LET'S PRACTICE

3. There is an extra word in each one of the following statements. Look for the incorrect word and cross it out. Then rewrite the sentences in the correct way.

- a) Everyone in the office is looking forward to having a coffee ~~up~~ break.
- b) Nelson couldn't stand his boss, so he hung it ~~in~~ up.
- c) My coworker asked me to keep ~~into~~ an eye on his computer. He is working on a confidential report.
- d) While everyone was giving suggestions to improve the sales, Ben was asleep at ~~from~~ the wheel.
- e) When we meet with our boss, he usually directs questions to those who are spacing ~~under~~ out.
- f) What bad luck!! I was late today and my manager said to me, "Hey, remember, time is ~~over~~ money!!"
- g) The owner of the factory is worried about the quality of the products. He said it's time for him to start calling ~~on~~ all the shots.
- h) A good leader proposes to work in a team. In other words, he / she asks everyone to put their heads ~~onto~~ together.



4. Complete the following sentences by matching them with their appropriate ending to the left.

- (f) 1. After our leader made such a mistake,...
- (d) 2. Simon is new in the company.
- (g) 3. Our boss advised us to put our heads together.
- (b) 4. It's too much work to do. I feel exhausted.
- (a) 5. Benny is really efficient. He does all his manager asks him to do.
- (h) 6. Maggie is in love with her coworker.
- (e) 7. When we arrive late at work,...
- (c) 8. After the reports showed that the sales decreased,...

- a) He's never asleep at the wheel.
- b) I think I am gonna hang it up.
- c) the chief decided to call the shots.
- d) We should invite him to have the coffee break to get to know him better.
- e) our boss always remind us that time is money!!
- f) the manager started to keep an eye on all of us.
- g) Since then, everything has been working well.
- h) She is spacing out all the time. I think she needs to focus more.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Read the short dialogues and decide whether the idiom used makes sense or doesn't make sense. Circle the correct answer.

- My job is great! I have a good salary, and there's not much work to do.
- Oh, nice! You should hang it up.
Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*
- I apologize for making that big mistake in my reports.
- That's what happens when you are spacing out!

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*



- Mary is exhausted. She took an hour break.
- She deserved it. After all, time is money.

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*

- Why didn't Brian do what his boss asked him to do?
- I think he was asleep at the wheel.

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*

- During the meeting, the chief was spacing out. Erick asked him about the new merchandise, but he couldn't answer.
- How strange! He always keeps an eye on our work.

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*

- Have you seen the new coworker? He is very handsome!
- Oh, sorry. I need to finish these accounts. Let's talk during the coffee break.

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*

- The new manager doesn't know who will be in charge of the new branch.
- That's not strange since he doesn't know the capabilities of his staff. But as a manager, he needs to call the shots.

Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*

- I heard you had an argument with your boss. What happened?
- Oh, don't worry. We just put out heads together.

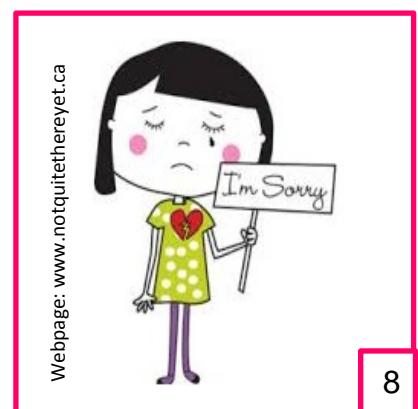
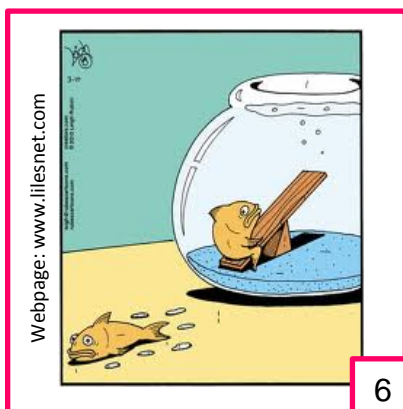
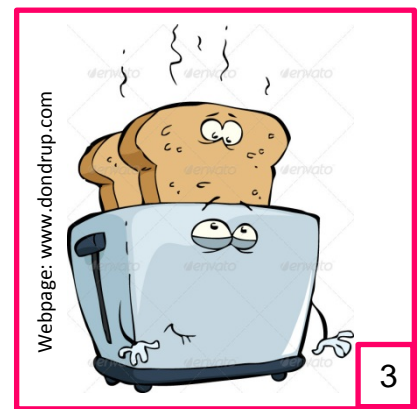
Makes sense / *doesn't make sense*



UNIT # 7: I'M SO SORRY. IT WAS MY BAD! (IDIOMS FOR HAVING PROBLEMS)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and try to guess the meaning of the idioms in bold in the sentences on the next page. Underline the correct definition.





1. The manager **gave me a hard time** since I came late for yesterday's meeting.

Definition:

To treat someone in a bad way.

2. He makes many excuses, but in the end, we are all **in the same boat**.

Definition:

In a similar unpleasant situation

3. What are you going to do? You lost your boyfriend's car keys! You're **toast!!!**

Definition:

To be in trouble

4. Stop yelling at me. Are you **asking for trouble?**

Definition:

To do something that will cause trouble

5. There was a miscalculation with the last bills. Derek is **in over his head!**

Definition:

Having difficulties that one can't manage

6. Mike was like **a fish out of water** when he stood in front of everyone to do karaoke. He has never sung in his entire life!

Definition:

To be in an uncomfortable situation

7. Mary's boyfriend is **in hot water!** She just caught him being too friendly with his ex.

Definition:

In trouble

8. It was **my bad**. So I'm going to apologize to him!

Definition:

Assume a mistake



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Complete the following statements by using the expressions in the box below. Conjugate the idioms that function as a verb if necessary:

to ask for trouble to give someone a hard time fish out of water
in hot water in over one's head to be toast
to be in the same boat "my bad"

- I felt so sad when my mom noticed I was drunk. The only thing I could say was "my bad."
- Since the day I got home late, my parents have been giving me a hard time.
- My sister left her business school. She said she felt like fish out of water. Now, she is going to study Art.
- I said to my parents that I was going to do my homework at Leslie's house. But they saw me with my boyfriend. I don't want to go home. I am toasted.
- That dog looks unfriendly. Look at it. He won't stop barking and you want to touch him? Don't ask for trouble!
- Ulysses and Walter are in the same boat. They are the only new students in the class.
- Some money was stolen from Karla's bag, and she thinks her maid took it. Her poor maid is in hot water.
- It's impossible to do this homework. I missed a class, and I have to finish this assignment for tomorrow. I am in over my head.



2. Return to section B, LET'S PUT 'EM IN SCENE, and rewrite conversation 1 and 2 using Standard English.

Conversation 1: *Two sisters, Gladys and Fanny, are arguing.*

Gladys: Fanny, I caught you! You came home at three o'clock in the morning from your boyfriend's party. You're in great trouble! I'm gonna tell daddy.

Fanny: You wouldn't dare do that. Remember, we're in the same situation.

Gladys: What? In the same situation? What do you mean?

Fanny: Don't you remember that the other day you told dad that you were going to the library, but instead you went to your boyfriend's house?

Gladys: If you tell daddy that I lied, I will tell mom that you lost her favorite bracelet.

Fanny: Don't do something that can cause problems, Gladys. I know you've lied to dad many times. So stay quiet!!!

Gladys: Sorry, It's my fault. I won't say anything, but I was worried about you. It was too late, and you weren't coming.

Fanny: I'm sorry, too. I love you, Gladys.

Conversation 2: *Benny is a new employee in a company, and he is asking Jean for a favor since she is the only one in the company he gets along with.*

Benny: Hi, Jean! Would you mind helping me finish my statistical reports? I don't know how to represent the budgets!!!

Jean: Sorry. I'm too busy now. I'm having problems handling the monthly expenses of the company. They don't match my accounts, and the quantity of money is too big.

Benny: Oh, no! You're the only one who can help me. You know that I feel like I'm not in the right place here.

Jean: I'd like to, but as I told you. I'm really busy. I'll be in trouble if I don't solve this problem.



Benny: So will I if I don't finish these reports. The boss has been making me feel bad since morning, and he asked me to hand in them in two hours.

Jean: Ok, try to finish them yourself, and later we can check them together.

Benny: Thanks a lot. I will.

E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

You know the answer, but what is the question? Tick the appropriate question for each one of these answers:

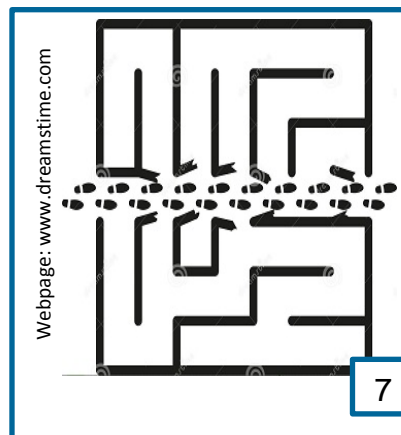
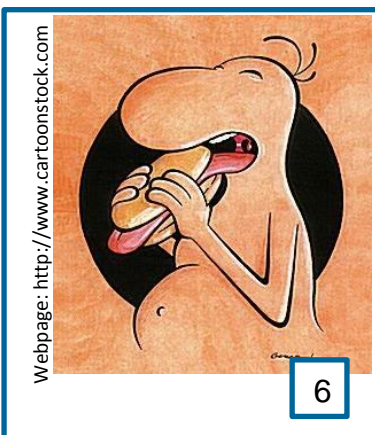
ANSWERS	QUESTIONS
Yes, she is too irresponsible. I think she is in hot water. My parents will be furious!	Did you say your sister left school?
Yeah, I heard about it. He always asks for trouble.	Did you know Alan was about to fight with Eric? Eric is much taller and stronger than him...!
Well, she asked me to do it. Now, unfortunately, we are in the same boat. The teacher's really angry	It is true that Nicole and you were cheating on the test?
No I couldn't. That's why my boss is giving me a hard time	Did you finish the annual reports? They were due today.
No way! I think it is in over my head. I am not good at science.	Were you able to develop the Science project? The teacher gave us some advice to do it
No, I haven't. When I am with them, I feel like a fish out of water	Have you gone out with your new British classmates? Their culture is pretty different from ours.
I don't know! I am in trouble. She is going to punish me. I am toast!	I can't believe it. How could you lose your mother's gold ring?
Of course! I tried to explain to her, but she didn't listen to me. In the end I just said "my bad."	Did you apologize for forgetting Marlene's birthday?



UNIT # 8: YOU SHOULD STOP TELLING WHITE LIES! (IDIOMS FOR GIVING ADVICE)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and try to guess the correct definitions of the idioms in bold. Check your answers.





1. Over time, people can experience a **change of heart**.

A change of heart means:

To change an opinion, or the way you feel about something.

2. Do you have a problem? Tell me, I'm **all ears!!!**

All ears means:

To listen carefully.

3. John **gave Sara a hand** when she was climbing up the mountain.

To give someone a hand means:

To help.

4. David told Isabel that he thought her baby was cute. It was obviously a **white lie**.

White lie means:

A lie with a good intention.

5. Michael tried to **put himself in his wife's shoes** to understand why she was complaining.

Put in someone's shoes means:

To try to experience something from a different point of view.

6. Sometimes it's better to **bite one's tongue** than saying something that can hurt someone.

To bite one's tongue means:

To not say something that you really want to say.

7. Alex always talks too much when he wants a favor. I think that it's better to **cut to the chase** and say what you intend to say.

Cut to the chase means:

To get to the point



8. Paul **came clean** during the trial. He want to be open and free of his problems.

Come clean means:

To honestly confess all.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Look for a mistake in each one of the following statements. Underline it and rewrite the sentence correctly.

- a) You are talking too much. I think you should cut at the chase and start the meeting.
You are talking too much. I think you should cut **to** the chase and start the meeting.
- b) It would be better if you come clear and recognize your mistake. This situation affects the harmony in the office.
It would be better if you come **clean** and recognize your mistake. This situation affects the harmony in the office.
- c) Our new neighbor has a lot of things to do. I think it would be nice to give him an arm.
Our new neighbor has a lot of things to do. I think it would be nice to give him an **hand**.
- d) Sally and Teresa didn't like each other until they met again at the college party. They talked about different things and had a change of head. Now, they are good friends.
Sally and Teresa didn't like each other until they met again at the college party. They talked about different things and had a change of **heart**. Now, they are good friends.
- e) Hernan was so angry and wanted to say so many things, but he didn't want to cause trouble; so he beat his tongue.
Hernan was so angry and wanted to say so many things, but he didn't want to cause trouble; so he **bite** his tongue.
- f) Men need to place themselves in women's shoes to know how it feels to be pregnant.



Men need to **put** themselves in women's shoes to know how it feels to be pregnant.

- g) Blanca hates hearing her boyfriend say he is all **eyes** while he is using his cellphone.

Blanca hates hearing her boyfriend say he is all **ears** while he is using his cellphone.

- h) My sister bought an ugly dress, but she loves it. So when she asked me for my opinion, I had to tell her a **black** lie.

My sister bought an ugly dress, but she loves it. So when she asked me for my opinion, I had to tell her a **white** lie.

2. Look for the extra word in each one of the following statements. cross it out and rewrite the sentence correctly.

- a. You should come **down** clean and tell her your reasons for not going to her party.
- b. I told my sister a white **soft** lie when she asked me about her new look.
- c. My father always said that it would be better to put yourself in **to** someone's shoes before criticizing him/her.
- d. My best friend is willing to talk to me whenever I have problems. She is always all ears **up**.
- e. When your parents are complaining about your behavior, it is better to bite your tongue **out** than talking back to them.
- f. My mom is angry with me because I came home late last night. When she is cleaning the house, I should give her **from** a hand with the chores; so, she'll be happy with me.
- g. Noemi's parents were about to get divorced, but she decided to talk to them. In the end, they had a change of **in** heart.
- h. I feel you are giving silly excuses, so please, cut **with** to the chase and tell me whatever is happening.



E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

People sometimes think one thing and say something else. Read their thoughts and what they say to decide if they are telling the truth or a lie.

How can she talk so much? I'll just make sounds like I'm listening to her, and I'll continue watching TV.

Lie

Oh, really? Did that happen? Ohhh... Yeah... of course, I'm listening! I'm **all ears!!!**

I can't stand people who can't do their job! Why do they always want me to explain everything to them? It's just a waste of time. They won't understand!!!

Lie

I'm glad to **give you a hand!** If you don't understand something, just tell me. Ok? I have all the time in the world to explain to you how this program works.



The burglars entered your house because you forgot to lock the door... you should confess to your parents the truth even if they are going to punish you severely.

Truth

Well, I think you should **come clean** with your parents about forgetting to lock the door. It's better to tell the truth.

I wish she were more straightforward. I don't need to listen to so many details to understand the situation.

Truth

Lila, I want you to **cut to the chase** and tell me what is going on?



Rachel always complains about her mother's decisions. I wish she **put herself in her mother's shoes** to understand her situation.

Lie

Rachel, you're right! I don't understand how your mom can be so unfair. It's better if you don't talk to her for a while.

Darwin already knows that you weren't with me. He hates liars more than cheaters, so I'm sure he will break up with you if you lie to him!

Lie

White lies don't hurt anybody. On the contrary, they are good because they make people feel better. Tell Darwin you were with me, so he won't find out that you cheated on him



The secretary hates critics. So, it's better to keep your mouth shut and have patience.

Truth

Bite your tongue if you're going to complain to the secretary about her service. If you don't, she'll never help you again.

I heard Hugh had a change of heart after seeing his sister being played by her boyfriend. I'm sure he'll respect his new girlfriend now.

Lie

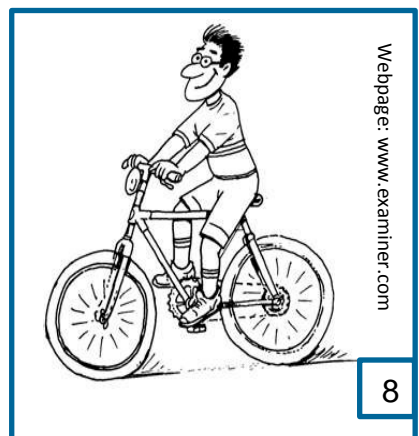
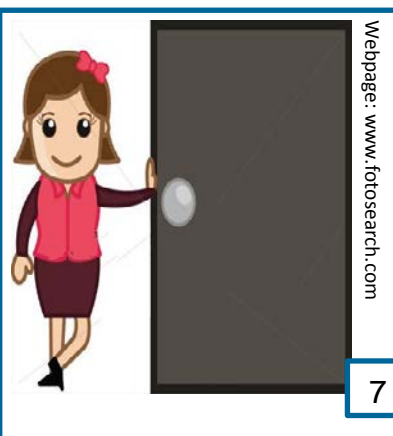
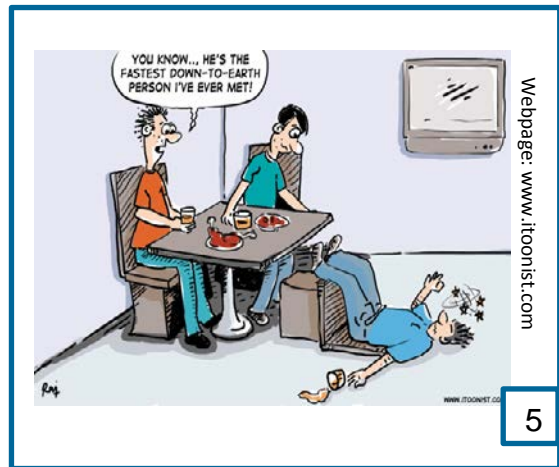
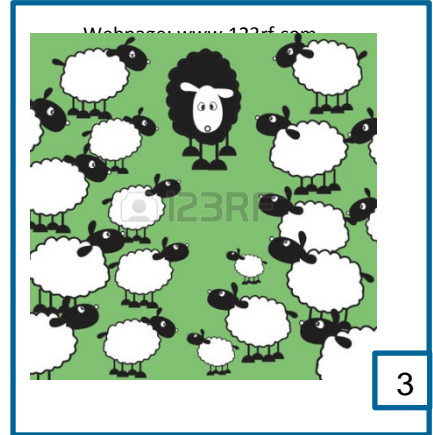
I advise you not to approach Hugh. He is a womanizer that only plays with women's hearts.



UNIT # 9: I'M THE BLACK SHEEP OF MY FAMILY (IDIOMS FOR DESCRIBING PEOPLE'S PERSONALITY)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Try to guess the meaning of the new idioms by using the pictures below. Then match the sentences with the meaning of the idioms.





(h) 1. I can't stand Adrian! He's always bothering me. He is **such a pain in the neck!!!**

(a) 2. I like that Henry is a **happy-go-lucky** kind of a person, but sometimes I would want him to be more concerned about life.

(g) 3. Malcolm is considered the **black sheep** of his family just because he decided not to follow in his father's footsteps

(f) 4. The boss likes **go-getters** people like Eren. He always has ideas and carries them out.

(d) 5. Ethan and I told Adam, the **down-to-earth** person from our group of friends, our idea about dropping out of school to dedicate ourselves to music. He almost fainted.

(e) 6. After Caesar refused to compete to see who was the best at skating, everybody told him that he was a **chicken**.

(c) 7. Meredith is like the **girl next door**. She is pretty, nice, and sensible, but she is just a friend.

(b) 8. George knows he is an **average Joe** for Kate, even so he has decided to ask her out.

- a. An easygoing person
- b. A normal guy or person
- c. A sweet-natured, nice woman
- d. A practical person
- e. A coward
- f. An enterprising person
- g. A person who is considered as a failure or disgrace by the family.
- h. An annoying person



D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. Circle the phrase that best completes the following statements:

- a) German's personality is unique. He is really a happy-go-lucky boy.
- b) Kelvin is considered an average Joe by Helen; anyway, she decided to give him a chance.
- c) Galo is a down-to-earth person. He knows it's difficult for him to travel to the USA
- d) Some people judge Lucas because they can't understand how such a young man has been able to be so successful. But he has always been a go-getter
- e) We couldn't believe when that girl was crowned the queen of the city. For us, she was just the girl next door.
- f) At the last moment, Fabian decided not to go bungee jumping. Everybody said he was a chicken.
- g) Everybody was shocked when they knew that Pablo decided to be a teacher instead a lawyer like his parents. That's why he was considered the black sheep of the family.
- h) I can't stand my younger brother. He takes my things without my permission, and sometimes he loses them He is a pain in the neck.



2. Complete the sentences with the right idioms according to the context.

Then solve the crossword

The crossword puzzle grid is shown with the following filled words and clues:

- 1** (Vertical): H, A, P, P, Y, -, G, O, -
- 2** (Vertical): P, A, I, N, ↓, I, N, ↓, T, H, E, ↓
- 3** (Horizontal): G, I, R, L →
- 4** (Vertical): D, ↓, W, N, -, T, O, -
- 5** (Horizontal): A, V, E, R, A, G, E →
- 6** (Vertical): O, ↓, G, E, T, T
- 7** (Vertical): C, H, I, C, ↓
- 8** (Horizontal): B, L, A, C, K →

Arrows indicate the direction of the words. The grid is black with white cells containing letters or numbers.



DOWN:

1. Marian is so strict that she can't stand working with **happy-go-lucky** people.
2. My new neighbor is a **pain in the neck** He has parties every weekends, that end at 5am.
4. This project needs to be directed by a **down-to-earth** person. The Company doesn't need unviable ideas.
6. I told my interviewer that one of my strengths is that I'm a **go-getter**. After he heard this, he started to treat me like an equal.
7. Darian scared me by showing me a spider. For me, it looked like a tarantula. Now, I'm considered the **chicken** of the group.

ACROSS

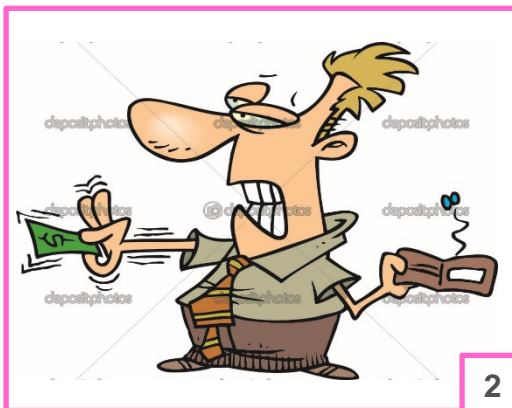
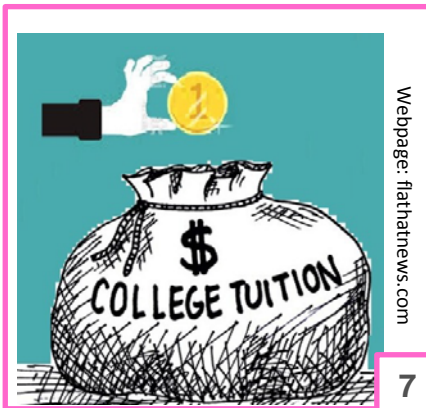
3. Annie is so sweet and kind to everybody. She is the **girl next door** all people want to talk to.
5. Mina has dated six **average Joes** and she is tired now. She is looking for a handsome, successful man.
8. Being considered the **black sheep** of the family isn't bad since you can behave really badly and your family isn't surprised.



UNIT # 10: IT'S STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET (IDIOMS FOR EXPENSES)

A) LET'S WARM UP

Look at the pictures and read the sentences on the next page. Do you understand the meaning of the words in bold? Try to guess the meaning by numbering the pictures from 1 to 8 based on the following statements:





1. My father is in charge of **bringing home the bacon**. He never complains about it.
2. Vincent is not too happy when he has to pay for something. He's **a cheapskate**.
3. Yesterday, Jasmine went shopping. Somebody told her the products were **dirt cheap**.
4. Christian has a big family and he is thinking about getting another job **to make ends meet**. He is always worried about paying the bills.
5. The director of the school owns two cars and a really big house. It seems he has **money to burn**.
6. Teddy got a **bang for the buck** with the new car he bought.
7. I think my studies will cost me a **pretty penny**, so I need to start saving money.
8. I can't stand Mario!! He is **well off**, and he likes to show people all the nice things he has.

D) LET'S PRACTICE

1. **Idioms are used in the following sentences. Rewrite the statements by replacing the idioms with Standard English without losing the meaning of the sentences:**

- a) My parents have asked me to bring home the bacon. I should start looking for a job.
My parents have asked me to bring money to home. I should start looking for a job.
- b) I think you must buy more of this product. It's dirt cheap. Take advantage of it!!
I think you must buy more of this product. It's extremely cheap. Take advantage of it!!
- c) My father says he needs another job to make ends meet.
My father says he needs another job to get the right amount of money to spend it.
- d) I am really happy. I got a bang for the buck on this new video game.
I am really happy. I got this new video game for a good price.
- e) When I want to buy something I don't really need, my mom always asks me, "do you have money to burn?"
When I want to buy something I don't really need, my mom always asks me, "do you have too much money that you can waste it on unnecessary things?"
- f) I love Mercy's dress. It must be authentic silk. But I'm sure it cost a pretty penny.
I love Mercy's dress. It must be authentic silk. But I'm sure it cost a lot of money.



- g) Don't be a cheapskate!! You should contribute money, so we can buy it. It will be for everyone in the house, including you!!
Don't be stingy!! You should contribute money, so we can buy it. It will be for everyone in the house, including you!!
- h) Our new neighbor seems to be well-off. Just, look at his car, his house, and his clothes!!
Our new neighbor seems to be rich. Just, look at his car, his house, and his clothes!!

2. Complete the sentences by finding the idioms in the puzzle. The words of the idioms have no space in the puzzle. For example: "dirtcheap"



R	O	Q	F	E	R	T	I	P	A	P	R	E	T	R	E	G	A	B	R	C	E	O	P
U	F	D	I	R	T	C	H	E	A	P	G	H	R	E	C	A	Q	W	A	R	T	I	A
I	L	I	A	M	A	K	E	N	D	R	T	R	Y	A	G	A	J	N	T	R	P	N	N
I	K	T	E	B	L	L	M	E	C	E	A	U	S	E	H	U	R	E	S	E	Y	T	O
E	J	O	B	R	I	N	J	C	R	T	Y	U	A	C	O	W	M	E	W	S	A	L	B
U	J	V	N	I	Y	S	T	H	E	T	A	K	S	P	A	E	H	C	H	O	N	I	U
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R	A	N	S	E	N	I	C	A	R	Y	U	S	O	M	E	B	S	O	D	F	A	H	A
E	X	B	N	T	A	S	H	T	A	U	U	E	S	L	E	D	L	I	F	T	T	L	R
C	A	A	R	H	O	A	I	E	M	I	K	E	M	O	N	A	N	A	R	H	A	R	U
H	D	N	O	E	N	K	T	G	E	T	C	U	S	E	F	Y	U	Y	N	K	A	A	W
E	W	J	F	B	A	N	G	F	O	R	T	H	E	B	U	C	K	R	E	T	K	C	E
A	Q	E	W	A	J	U	W	R	O	N	G	K	G	R	A	N	T	E	D	H	E	O	A
Q	A	R	E	C	I	N	H	W	E	M	A	K	E	C	O	P	T	A	E	N	L	M	R
W	Q	O	L	O	H	I	A	A	V	M	U	S	E	B	L	Y	U	M	E	I	I	P	E
E	W	M	O	N	E	Y	T	O	B	U	R	N	A	M	E	H	E	B	U	S	T	L	P
R	N	T	F	A	K	Q	B	R	I	N	B	R	U	N	O	N	T	U	L	F	A	I	R
H	O	H	F	O	A	R	K	I	K	O	E	R	U	H	O	W	T	Q	R	A	L	C	E
J	M	E	R	I	R	M	A	M	O	R	A	B	I	T	T	E	O	H	W	D	K	E	T

- I love the way my best friend dresses. She told me she goes to an outlet mall and gets clothes for dirtcheap!
- Nico's new house is big, and it has an enormous yard. I bet it cost him a pretty penny.
- Mercy couldn't believe how her husband spent a month's salary at a casino. She thought that he definitely has money to burn.
- Meredith wishes she were a well-off person. In that way, she wouldn't have to work so hard to make ends meet.
- Lucas is such a cheapskate! He doesn't even like to pay for the food he eats!!!
- I'm the head of the house since I'm the person who brings home the bacon.
- I got a bang for the buck on the last trip I took. I bought all the souvenirs in a duty-free shop.



E) LET'S USE 'EM IN CONTEXT

Complete the following story by using the idioms learned in this unit:

In my neighborhood, there was a couple that looked as if they were happy. The man was the one who **bring home the bacon**. His wife stayed at home taking care of their children. Once I met the wife at the mall. She was buying some clothes, and she picked ones that seemed to cost a **pretty penny**. I thought that this couple was **well-off**, so it was easy for them to spend the money they wanted. When I got home, I saw the couple arguing in the middle of the street. The man was really angry, and... ops! I heard him accidentally cry out, "do you think we **have money to burn**." While she cried, she called him a **cheapskate** because he didn't like spending money on things she needed. Then he answered that he had to work extra hours to **make ends meet**, and that there were priorities for spending money. The woman was sorry for having bought the expensive clothes and decided to sell them. Nobody wanted to pay her the real price, so she didn't get any **bang for the buck**. But the amount of money she received helped them with the house expenses. Since that time, the couple lived more quietly, though she continued going to the mall. However, she was aware of the prices. She bought products that are **dirt cheap**.



VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature review that has supported the development of this project states the importance of teaching and learning idioms in EFL environments. One of the aspects of its importance is based on the fact that foreign language learners (FLL) are exposed to this kind of nonliteral language only in the classroom; however, there are some instances where idioms are not taught in the foreign language classroom, thus learners do not have the opportunity to be in contact and practice with this kind of language.

Since idioms belong to the semantic and pragmatic part of a language, they cannot be underestimated when learning it. Moreover, since idioms are in any kind of social setting, foreign language learners (FLL) should know and use at least the most common ones. This will help them, to some extent, not to lose track of a conversation, misunderstand the speaker's words, or feel confused. Therefore, learning idioms is beneficial for foreign language learners since they increase a lexicon that can be retrieved as whole chunks when speaking, thus facilitating fluency. Additionally, idioms share cultural features that help learners comprehend native speakers' world

For these reasons, idioms cannot be neglected if the purpose of learning a foreign language is mastering it. Since this is the case of the English Language and Literature school of Universidad de Cuenca, it can be stated that nonliteral language should be taught during all of their academic preparation.

It was considered that Conversation II classes are the ideal ones to introduce this kind of nonliteral language. However, after checking the content



of the books, *Let's talk I* and *Let's talk II*, and the syllabus for this class, it was noticed a lack of specific activities related to idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, there is not enough teaching material about idioms that can be used by the teachers. It is essential to point out that neither this chapter nor any other part of this project has the intention of criticizing the learning program of conversation classes of Universidad de Cuenca; on the contrary, the purpose of the research was to aid the teacher's job by providing extra material that can be used as a complement for conversation classes since part of its content is based on the books for this class.

The researchers recommend the use of this booklet since it contains dynamic activities with images and dialogues that enable the comprehension of idioms in context. In addition, It does not only include an explanation about the meaning of the idioms but also an explanation about their function with activities that engage students to use them in context, thus allowing them to learn to use the language more confidently. Moreover, these activities challenge students to think about a variety of situations and produce the language in real-life settings using idiomatic expressions. This booklet can be used as a complement for the content of the book for conversation classes.

Regarding the use of the booklet, the researchers recommend its application when the topic of the lesson is related to one of the categories of this booklet. Furthermore, as complementary material, teachers might apply this booklet whenever they want their students to practice the language in a communicative way.



Finally, despite the fact that the booklet is directed to conversation classes, it is necessary to mention that the teaching of idioms can be applied in any other subject whose main objective is language proficiency such as pragmatics and sociolinguistic. Therefore, the teachers in charge of these subjects might consider using this booklet to look for material related to idioms since its content has topics of interest for university students.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview transcriptions

Interview to conversation teacher, Master Corbin Campbell, about the teaching of idioms in his classes.

20/10/2014

Design of a booklet to teach idioms in conversation classes to third-term students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the teaching of idioms in conversation classes at the English Language and Literature school, Universidad de Cuenca. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Q: Can you tell us the name of the book that you use with third-term students for conversation classes?

A: Let's Talk I and Let's Talk II

Q: Does this book contain something related to idioms?

A: Some are included in the content.

Q: Extracurricularly, have you taught your students some idioms?

A: Yes.

Mayra Nataly Campoverde Villavicencio
María José Carpio Cevallos



Q: How much did you deepen in this topic? Why?

a) Much _____ b) Some _____ c) A little X d) Other _____

A: Idioms are of limited if any use academically in the classroom, but are fun to learn and teach.

Q: When you meet with your coworkers to deliberate about the book that you are going to use during a school year, have you analyzed the possibility that that book contains idioms in its content?

A: I have not had a chance to meet with them to choose a book yet, but it would be nice if the book included some idioms because it would be more interesting.

Q: Do you think idioms are important when learning a language? Why?

A: Yes. They expand the sociolinguistic competence of the students, which contributes to improve language learning. It also reduces affective filters.



Interview to conversation teacher, Lcdo. Juan José Santillán, about the teaching of idioms in his classes.

20/10/2014

Design of a booklet to teach idioms in conversation classes to third-term students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the teaching of idioms in conversation classes at the English Language and Literature school, Universidad de Cuenca. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Q: Can you tell us the name of the book that you use with third-term students for conversation classes?

A: Let's Talk II (Cambridge) Author: Leo Jones.

Q: Does this book contain something related to idioms?

A: Not at this level. I don't know about other levels

Q: Extracurricularly, have you taught your students some idioms?

A: No, we are behind the schedule.

Q: How much did you deepen in this topic? Why?

a) Much _____ b) Some _____ c) A little X d) Other _____



A: I have to catch up with the syllabus.

Q: When you meet with your coworkers to deliberate about the book that you are going to use during a school year, have you analyzed the possibility that that book contains idioms in its content?

A: I haven't had the opportunity to be involved in this decision.

Q: Do you think idioms are important when learning a language? Why?

A: Yes. They are an important element of TL content and culture. We use them in everyday conversations, so they are needed to achieve communicative competence.



Appendix 2: The original three hundred idioms

	LOVE
1	to break someone's heart
2	to break up with
3	to get hitched
4	to have a crush on
5	to have a thing for
6	head over heels
7	love at first sight
8	made for each other
9	to pop the question
10	prince charming
11	to steal one's heart
12	to tie the knot
13	until the end of time
14	to turn someone down
15	to lead someone on
16	an old flame
17	sweet nothings
18	to catch someone's eye
19	puppy love
20	love is blind
21	a love nest



22	to have eyes only for
23	to ask someone out
24	to go steady
25	to stand someone up
26	to take one's breath away
27	the apple of someone's eye
28	to have an affair
29	to cheat on
30	to hit on

	HEALTH
1	fit as a fiddle
2	green around the gills
3	in good shape
4	under the weather
5	to be in fine fettle
6	to put on weight
7	on a diet
8	alive and kicking
9	at death's door
10	back on one's feet
11	to black out
12	to burn oneself out



13	to catch a cold
14	Checkup
15	a clean bill of health
16	to come down with something
17	to fall ill
18	to feel fit
19	to feel on top of the world
20	a flare-up
21	to go under the knife
22	in the pink of health
23	on medication
24	to run a fever
25	sick in bed
26	to bring someone around
27	on the mend
28	out cold
29	over the worst
30	up and about

SCHOOL	
1	as easy as ABC
2	to brainstorm
3	bookworm



4	to catch up to
5	copycat
6	to crack a book
7	to crank out
8	to drop out of school
9	to flunk out
10	to have one's nose in a book
11	to hit the book
12	honor roll
13	to learn by heart
14	to pass with flying colors
15	to play hooky
16	teacher's pet
17	a pop quiz
18	class clown
19	to cut class
20	to ace
21	to pull an all-nighter
22	straight A's
23	to blow a test
24	killer test
25	make-up exam
26	to cram for
27	swot



28	show of hands
29	A for effort
30	to skip class

BUSINESS	
1	don't count your chickens before they hatch
2	to go belly up
3	to have an ace up your sleeve
4	to have all the aces
5	belt-tightening
6	bitter pill to swallow
7	ahead of the curve
8	diamond in the rough
9	to go for broke
10	to make a killing
11	to make a mint
12	null and void
13	on a roll
14	talk shop
15	to sell like hotcakes
16	money talks
17	to wear the pants
18	plan B



19	to rack one's brain
20	to start from scratch
21	to put all your eggs in one basket
22	big cheese
23	to come a long way
24	dead in the water
25	hard sell
26	to get down to business
27	a cash cow
28	to be a money spinner
29	to work like a dream
30	to hit the big time

	FOOD
1	your eyes are bigger than your stomach
2	it's my treat
3	to pig out
4	it's a finger licking good
5	to drink like a fish
6	to eat like a horse
7	to break bread
8	to kill the fatted calf
9	to dine out



10	done to a turn
11	to eat and run
12	to make a pig of yourself
13	to eat like a bird
14	to grab a bite
15	a pick-me-up
16	to burn to a crisp
17	to make one's mouth water
18	to melt in one's mouth
19	doggie bag
20	square meal
21	cup of joe
22	sweet tooth
23	a lion's share of
24	to wolf down
25	to die for
26	to cut down
27	a side of
28	to skip
29	to go dutch
30	leftovers



HAVING PROBLEMS	
1	in a pickle
2	to open a can of worms
3	to let the cat out of the bag
4	to cross swords
5	to fight like cats and dogs
6	to ask for trouble
7	back to the wall
8	to go to the mat
9	to add fuel to the fire
10	caught red-handed
11	fish out of water
12	out of hands
13	to goof up
14	high and dry
15	in a jam
16	in hot water
17	in over one's head
18	to lock horns
19	to pass the buck
20	to go south
21	one's goose is cooked
22	to have enough on one's plate



23	my bad
24	to be in the same boat
25	to smell a rat
26	tempest in a teapot
27	to be toast
28	a monkey on one's back
29	hard nut to crack
30	to give someone a hard time

	WORK
1	to pay peanuts
2	dead-end job
3	to get the boot
4	to hang it up
5	to get the pink slip
6	to give a blank check
7	asleep at the wheel
8	someone's bread and butter
9	to burn the midnight oil
10	twenty four seven
11	to pull an all-nighter
12	time is money
13	big fish



14	busy as a beaver
15	labor of love
16	mickey mouse job
17	number cruncher
18	to put one's head together
19	to work against the clock
20	to work like a dog
21	a screw up
22	to call the shots
23	to space out
24	to keep an eye on
25	coffee break
26	to be cooking with gas
27	all hands on deck
28	to keep one's nose to the grindstone
29	snowed under
30	movers and shakers

GIVING ADVICE	
1	to cool your jets
2	the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence
3	don't bite of more than you can chew
4	Rome wasn't built in a day



5	actions speak louder than words
6	to cut to the chase
7	haste makes waste
8	it takes two to tango
9	the bigger they are the harder they fall
10	in one ear and out the other
11	to keep your shirt on
12	don't cry over spilt milk
13	to come clean
14	to give someone a hand
15	change of heart
16	to bite one's tongue
17	to face the music
18	to let sleeping dogs lie
19	to put yourself in someone's shoes
20	to kiss and make up
21	don't throw in the towel
22	every dog has its day
23	to hold someone's horses
24	If you are given lemons make lemonade
25	life is just a bowl of cherries
26	curiosity killed the cat
27	all ears
28	to turn over a new leaf



29	white lie
30	to clear the air

DESCRIBING PEOPLE	
1	snooty
2	goody-goody
3	high and mighty
4	girl next door
5	to be a chicken
6	rotten apple
7	black sheep
8	pigheaded
9	eager beaver
10	square peg
11	to have a heart of gold
12	pain in the neck
13	happy-go-lucky
14	average joe
15	party animal
16	bird brain
17	to be a dinosaur
18	two-faced
19	to be green



20	armchair critic
21	down in the dumps
22	bad egg
23	to call a spade a spade
24	fat cat
25	cat's whiskers
26	down-to-earth
27	behind the times
28	go-getter
29	social butterfly
30	party pooper

EXPENSES	
1	to cost an arm and a leg
2	in the lap of luxury
3	to bring home the bacon
4	dirt cheap
5	to foot the bill
6	for peanuts
7	to make ends meet
8	to be chicken feed
9	to cost a pretty penny
10	to cost the earth



11	bang for the buck
12	to go through the roof
14	money to burn
15	to pay through the nose
16	penny pincher
17	to roll in it
18	to set someone back
19	to spend money like water
20	to tighten one's belt
21	money doesn't grow on trees
22	to be a rip-off
23	closefisted
24	flat broke
25	pretty penny
26	to throw money down the drain
27	Cheapskate
28	to cough it up
29	well off
30	to burn a hole in one's pocket

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Appendix 3: Survey template

Survey conducted to eighty native English speakers.

The following survey has the purpose of collecting information related to the most common idioms used by native English speakers. The results will be the basis for a graduation project entitled “Design of a booklet to teach idioms in conversation classes to third-term students of the English Language and Literature School at Universidad de Cuenca.”

Please, tick *eight* idioms per each section.

Age: _____

001L

- a. to break someone's heart
- b. to break up with
- c. to have a crush on
- d. love at first sight
- e. prince charming
- f. to turn someone down
- g. to catch someone's eye
- h. to ask someone out
- i. to take one's breath away
- j. to have an affair
- k. to cheat on
- l. to hit on

002H

- a. in good shape
- b. to put on weight
- c. on a diet
- d. back on one's feet
- e. to black out
- f. checkup
- g. to come down with something
- h. to fall ill
- i. a clean bill of health
- j. on medication
- k. to bring someone around
- l. out cold



003S

- a. to brainstorm
- b. to catch up to
- c. copycat
- d. to crank out
- e. to drop out of school
- f. to flunk out
- g. honor roll
- h. to play hooky
- i. to ace
- j. straight A's
- k. pop quiz
- l. show of hands

004B

- a. to go belly up
- b. belt-tightening
- c. ahead of the curve
- d. to make a killing
- e. on a roll
- f. plan B
- g. to start from scratch
- h. to come a long way
- i. dead in the water
- j. hard sell
- k. to get down to business
- l. a cash cow

005F

- a. to break bread
- b. to dine out
- c. to grab a bite
- d. to melt in one's mouth
- e. sweet tooth
- f. a lion's share of
- g. to wolf down
- h. to die for
- i. to cut down
- j. a side of
- k. to skip
- l. leftovers

006W

- a. to hang it up
- b. asleep at the wheel
- c. someone's bread and butter
- d. time is money
- e. big fish
- f. labor of love
- g. to put one's head together
- h. to call the shots
- i. to space out
- j. to keep an eye on
- k. coffee break
- l. movers and shakers

007HP

- a. to ask for trouble
- b. back to the wall
- c. to give someone a hard time
- d. fish out of water
- e. high and dry
- f. in hot water
- g. in over one's head
- h. to pass the buck
- i. to go south
- j. my bad
- k. to be in the same boat
- l. to be toast

008GA

- a. to cut to the chase
- b. to come clean
- c. to give someone a hand
- d. change of heart
- e. to bite one's tongue
- f. to face the music
- g. to put yourself in someone's shoes
- h. to hold someone's horses
- i. all ears
- j. to turn over a new leaf
- k. white lie
- l. to clear the air



009DP

- a. snooty
- b. girl next door
- c. to be a chicken
- d. black sheep
- e. pain in the neck
- f. happy-go-lucky
- g. average joe
- h. to be green
- i. fat cat
- j. down-to-earth
- k. behind the times
- l. go-getter

010E

- a. to bring home the bacon
- b. dirt cheap
- c. to foot the bill
- d. for peanuts
- e. to make ends meet
- f. bang for the buck
- g. to go through the roof
- h. money to burn
- i. to set someone back
- j. pretty penny
- k. cheapskate
- l. well off

Thank you for your great help!