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# a Good Turn of Phrase

Advanced Idiom Practice



Express Publishing

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# Unit 1

- 1** Read the letter and try to explain the idioms in bold.



Dear Mary,

Sorry Lionel and I were such poor company last weekend, but we were both feeling **1) down in the dumps**, especially after finding out that Terry had been **2) keeping us in the dark** about the severity of the company's money problems. I was so angry with him. My own brother — can you believe it? Believe me, running a family business **3) isn't all it's cracked up to be!**

Anyway, the morning after you left, I was reading the paper when an advert for a week in a country cottage **4) caught my eye**. It sounded **5) right up our street**, so I mentioned it to Lionel and, after a lot of persuading, he finally agreed that we both needed to **6) take things easy** for a bit.

We've been here for five days now and I feel so much better. It's right **7) off the beaten track**, so Lionel and I have had enough peace and quiet to talk about the company's problems and come up with some solutions. I'll tell you one thing — Terry is going to **8) come down to earth with a bump** when we get back!

This place is truly fantastic, and Lionel's **9) in his element** at the moment as the river near here is excellent for fishing. He got up at **10) the crack of dawn** today and returned at lunch-time with an enormous trout!

I'd better go now as we're leaving tomorrow and I haven't started packing yet. I'll give you a ring as soon as we get back.

Love,  
Jane

- 2** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 1.

a to relax	f within one's range of interests/ knowledge
b to keep sb unaware of sth	g depressed
c to be not as good as people say	h very happy/suited to a situation
d to stop dreaming and start thinking practically	i to get sb's attention
e isolated and quiet	j very early in the morning

- 3** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*kept in the dark, caught my eye, down in the dumps, came down to earth with a bump, all it's cracked up to be*

- Sam thought he could pass his exam without studying, but he ..... when he failed.
- He was ..... about his surprise retirement party.
- The new restaurant isn't .....; it may look nice, but the food is awful!
- I bought Ann some flowers because she looked .....
- The beautiful clothes in the shop window ..... , so I went in and bought a dress.

- 4** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*right up my street, take things easy, the crack of dawn, off the beaten track, in your element*

Greg: Hi Jim. How did you spend your week off?

Jim: I went camping in Snowdonia. It was brilliant; no phones or traffic or anything like that for a whole week. It was completely **1) .....**



Greg: That sounds **2) .....**! I could do with a few days out of the city.

Jim: Yeah. Imagine it Greg — getting up at **3) .....** every day and watching the sun rise as you cook your breakfast, then a bit of walking or fishing with no one telling you what to do.

Greg: You must have been **4) .....**, Jim.

Jim: You're right there! Actually, I'm going again next weekend. Do you want to come?

Greg: Maybe another time. I think I'll just stay at home and **5) .....** instead.

- 5** Read the advertisement and try to explain the idioms in bold.



# 1) GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

ON THE COSTA BLANCA

## Hotel Blanca

- 1 week - only £100
- 5-star hotel, full board
- lively holiday resort

Phone: 01215 49268

Tired of holidaying in the same old **2) run-of-the-mill** places? Are you searching for sandy white beaches where you can sunbathe till you're **3) as brown as a berry**, or **4) round-the-clock** bars and discos where you can dance all night? If so, then **5) your best bet** is the Costa Blanca in Spain.

You'll be **6) over the moon** with both the Hotel Blanca and its delightful location on the Spanish coast, where you'll find a multitude of ways to **7) get into the swing of** your holiday, ranging from jet-skiing to paragliding. Food-lovers won't be disappointed either, as the Hotel Blanca has two terrific restaurants. One word of warning, however, for more conventional diners — **8) steer clear** of the *Chili a la Blanca* — it's hot!

So, if you fancy a holiday where you can **9) let your hair down**, and return home with **10) a new lease of life** — try the Hotel Blanca — we guarantee you won't regret it.

- 6** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 5.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a to take a break from work or problems | f all day and all night                             |
| b a return of energy or enthusiasm      | g to become accustomed to sth and start enjoying it |
| c to relax and enjoy oneself            | h to avoid (sb/sth)                                 |
| d extremely pleased                     | i very suntanned                                    |
| e the most appropriate choice           | j ordinary and unexciting                           |

- 7** Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.

- Speaking in front of an audience can be nerve-racking, but once you become accustomed to it, you'll find it easy.  
**swing** .....
- My apartment block has a 24-hour security system.  
**clock** .....
- I'm tired of ordinary novels. I want to read something original.  
**mill** .....
- We decided to go to a desert island so that we could escape from our daily problems.  
**away** .....
- I was extremely happy when I won first prize.  
**moon** .....

- 8** Replace the words in bold with phrases from the list.

*steer clear of, letting my hair down, new lease of life, best bet, was as brown as a berry*



On the first day of my summer holiday in France I was in the mood for **enjoying myself and having some fun**, and finally I decided that a day of jet-skiing would be **my most suitable option**. Once I had learnt how to control the machine and **stay away from** the big waves, I really started to enjoy whizzing across the surface of the sea. When I arrived back at the hotel I **had a fantastic suntan** and felt as if I had been given a **burst of new energy**. It was a great way to start my holiday.

### 9 Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*down in the dumps*    *take things easy*    *caught my eye*  
*best bet*    *a new lease of life*    *run-of-the-mill*  
*right up your street*    *let our hair down*  
*get away from it all*    *off the beaten track*

- The doctor told him to ..... until he was strong enough to work again.
- Sharon felt ..... so we decided to try and cheer her up.
- This interesting magazine article ....., so I decided to send it to you.
- This beach is ..... so very few people know about it.
- Grandpa seems so much happier since his retirement; it's given him .....
- If you're looking for a cheap holiday, your ..... is Wright's Travel.
- After a tense week at work, we decided to go out on Friday night and .....
- This resort is a bit .....; it has some good points, but it's nothing special.
- I think you'll find this restaurant is .....; it's got great food, it's quiet and very reasonable.
- The politician needed a break from his busy schedule, so he went on a sailing trip to .....

### 10 Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.

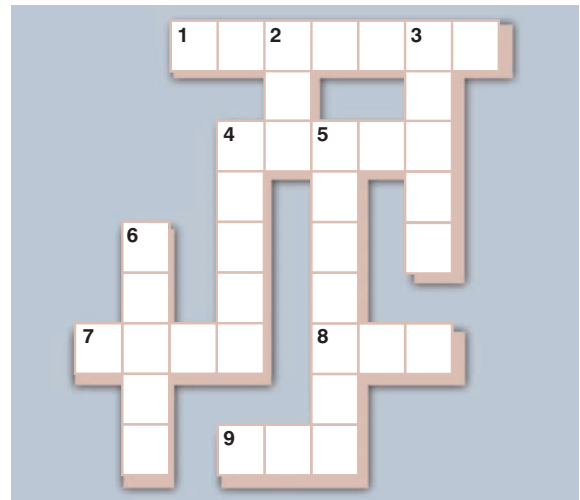
- This novel isn't as good as everyone says it is.  
**cracked** .....
- I play badminton quite often now that I know the game and I'm getting better at it.  
**swing** .....
- After her holiday, trouble at work made Martha face reality again.  
**earth** .....
- Janet was really happy at the disco as she loves dancing.  
**element** .....
- It's the first time we've won the cup and we're delighted.  
**moon** .....
- John worked all day and all night to finish the assignment.  
**clock** .....
- Since shellfish upsets my stomach, I try to avoid it.  
**steer** .....
- My father didn't tell me about my mother's illness.  
**dark** .....

- After a week on the beach in Tunisia, I have a great suntan.  
**berry** .....
- I get up early in order to avoid the traffic on the way to work.  
**crack** .....

### 11 Answer the questions below:

- Can something be **off the beaten track** and **right up your street** at the same time? Why/Why not?
- If you **came down to earth with a bump**, would you be **in your element**? Why/Why not?
- If you discovered that the hotel where you were staying **wasn't all it was cracked up to be**, would you get up at **the crack of dawn** and leave? Why/Why not?

### 12 Use the words missing from the sentences below to complete the crossword.



#### Across

- This hotel isn't all it's ..... up to be.
- The Star Hotel is awful — steer ..... of it.
- She kept her parents in the ..... about her new boyfriend.
- This vase caught my ..... at the antique shop.
- I think the African safari would be your best ..... for a holiday.

#### Down

- I should take a holiday; I need to get away from it ....
- He'll come down to ..... with a bump when he finds out the truth.
- You can get a snack anytime as the coffee bar is open round the .....
- Dave loves gardening; he's in his ..... when he's outdoors.
- The house is difficult to find as it's off the beaten .....



# Unit 2

- 1** Read the letter and try to explain the idioms in bold.



Dear Mum,

Just a quick note to ask you for a bit of advice. I'm quite worried about Sharon and I just don't know what to do.

She came round a few weeks ago to tell me that she'd been on a date with Paul Regan, **1) an old flame** of hers from university. Now, I don't know if you remember him, but I do — he **2) stole her heart** at the beginning of her first year and she was convinced that she'd met **3) the man of her dreams**. For a while it seemed that he was **4) head over heels in love** with her too, but then, all of a sudden, at the end of her second year, he told her he never wanted to see her again and **5) broke her heart**.

Anyway, it seems that he's had **6) a change of heart**, but I just don't trust him. She says she's not interested in him, but quite obviously she is. She can't hide the way she feels — you know how she **7) wears her heart on her sleeve**. I know Sharon and I haven't always **8) seen eye to eye** on a lot of matters, but she is my sister and I do care about her. What worries me is that the same thing might happen again.

I know **9) all's fair in love and war**, but as I said, I don't want to watch her go through it all over again. Could you talk to her, please?

Love,  
Brenda

P.S. Mum, careful what you tell her because right now, she thinks Paul **10) is the bee's knees**.

- 2** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 1.

a	a change of one's feelings for sth/sb	g	to make sb fall in love with one
b	to allow one's feelings to be too obvious	h	to be the best there is
c	very much in love with sb	i	to agree (about matters)
d	sb one was once in love with	j	all actions are justified when there are feelings of love/rivalry
e	the ideal man		
f	to cause sb great unhappiness		

- 3** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*head over heels in love, a change of heart, broke his heart, bee's knees, see eye to eye*

- Sally ..... when she told John she was leaving him.
- David must have had ..... because he's decided to move to Manchester after all.
- Tracy thinks her new boyfriend is the ..... — she never stops talking about him.
- After their first date they fell ..... with each other.
- Robert and I are always arguing — we never ..... on anything.

- 4** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*the man of her dreams, wear your heart on your sleeve, an old flame, stole your heart, all's fair in love and war*

- Frank: Hi, Mike. I ran into **1)** ..... of yours yesterday.
- Mike: Oh, really! Who?
- Frank: Karen, of course. The one who **2)** ..... on that holiday in Andorra.
- Mike: Of course, Karen. How is she?
- Frank: Fine. She's getting married next year.
- Mike: Hmm. She said I was **3)** ..... in Andorra. I really loved her, you know.
- Frank: I know she betrayed you, Mike. But then, as they say, "**4)** ..... ". Next time, don't **5)** .....



- 5** Read the dialogue and try to explain the idioms in bold. Then look at the picture and say which idiom it represents.



Gladys: Morning Mabel. You'll never guess who I got a letter from today!

Mabel: Go on, who?

Gladys: Edith Barclay, you know, she used to live at number 6.

Mabel: Edith Barclay! Ooh, I haven't heard from her for **1) donkey's years!** Have she and her son **2) buried the hatchet** yet?

Gladys: Well, that's what she wrote to tell me! Oh, do you remember when Samuel was little? He was **3) the apple** of his mother's **eye** ... and then they fell out when he started seeing that girl ... What was her name?

Mabel: Ooh, Sheila Briggs. Her parents were lovely folk, but she was **4) the black sheep of the family.**

Gladys: I can't see what he saw in her. I remember he chased after her for ages — she really **5) played hard to get!**

Mabel: Yes. And then when they finally started seeing each other he was **6) like putty in her hands** — he even stopped talking to his mother because that girl told him to.

Gladys: Terrible. Anyway, back to the letter ... the Briggs girl must've finally **7) driven him round the bend** — because he broke up with her.

Mabel: Oh good!

Gladys: Yes, and guess what? Edith introduced him to a young lady — Edith said she's a lovely girl. Anyway, apparently they **8) tied the knot** last month and now, what with Sam's good job and all, they're living **9) in clover!**

Mabel: Oh, how lovely. Mind you, I always thought they'd sort it out in the end — after all, **10) blood is thicker than water.**

Gladys: Quite right!

- 6** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 5.

a to pretend one is not interested in sb	g a long time
b to annoy sb a lot	h sb one is most fond of
c easily controlled or manipulated	i a person strongly disapproved of by members of his/her family
d in comfort/wealth	j blood ties or family relationships are the strongest
e to get married	
f to forget old quarrels	

- 7** Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.

- Robert and Helen have decided to get married at Christmas.  
**tie** .....
- It has been ages since I last went to the theatre.  
**donkey's** .....
- Although David is acting like he's not interested, it's obvious that he likes Mary.  
**playing** .....
- After years of arguing, the sisters agreed to forget their differences.  
**hatchet** .....
- Her constant complaining really annoys me.  
**bend** .....

- 8** Choose the word which best completes each sentence.

- Anne always does whatever Frank tells her to do. She's like ..... in his hands.  
A glue B putty C butter D clay
- Fred was in ..... after he won the lottery.  
A clover B grass C wheat D barley
- Perhaps because he was so different, he became the black ..... of the family.  
A cow B cat C sheep D donkey
- Laura thinks her son can do no wrong — he's the apple of her .....  
A eye B ear C heart D mind
- Why not ask your family for a loan — after all, blood is ..... than water.  
A denser B heavier C thinner D thicker

**9 Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.**

- 1 No, Mary is not my girlfriend. She is someone I used to go out with.  
**flame** .....
- 2 Isn't it nice to see a young couple so much in love?  
**head** .....
- 3 After they won the lottery, they lived comfortably for the rest of their lives.  
**clover** .....
- 4 My wife and I disagree about keeping a dog.  
**eye** .....
- 5 He tricked her into marrying him, but then I suppose it's alright because he loves her.  
**war** .....
- 6 After ten years of living together, they finally got married.  
**knot** .....
- 7 I think Ann really likes Charles but she is pretending not to be interested.  
**hard** .....
- 8 Sally has made Geoff go on a diet. Geoff does anything she wants.  
**putty** .....
- 9 You haven't spoken to your sister for a month. It's time you forgot your disagreement.  
**hatchet** .....
- 10 Tom really loves Claire. She's the most important person in his life.  
**apple** .....

**10 Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:**

<i>bee's knees</i>	<i>black sheep of the family</i>
<i>donkey's years</i>	<i>man of my dreams</i>
<i>stolen his heart</i>	<i>broke my heart</i>
<i>thicker than water</i>	<i>wears his heart on his sleeve</i>
<i>change of heart</i>	<i>round the bend</i>

- 1 He .....; anyone can see how much he loves her.
- 2 Bill's really annoying to share a flat with. He's driving me .....
- 3 She seems to have .....; I hope she doesn't break it.
- 4 I have been working here for .....
- 5 Ever since Debbie got the leading role in the play, she thinks she's the .....
- 6 I always support my brother in arguments. After all, blood is .....

- 7 Uncle Mark dropped out of school and has never had a steady job. He's the .....
- 8 The headmaster has had a ..... and he isn't going to expel you after all.
- 9 He's tall, dark, handsome, a millionaire and he wants to marry me. He's the .....
- 10 Yvonne ..... when she left me for Adrian.

**11 Answer the questions below:**

- 1 Would you expect to find **the black sheep of the family** living **in clover**? Why/Why not?
- 2 If you were **the apple of somebody's eye**, would they be **like putty in your hands**? Why/Why not?
- 3 Would it be wise for two people who don't **see eye to eye** to **tie the knot**? Why/Why not?
- 4 If you **wear your heart on your sleeve**, are you likely to **have your heart broken**? Why/Why not?

**12 This couple has just heard that their daughter is planning on getting married. Using some of the idioms below, discuss possible reasons why they look angry.**

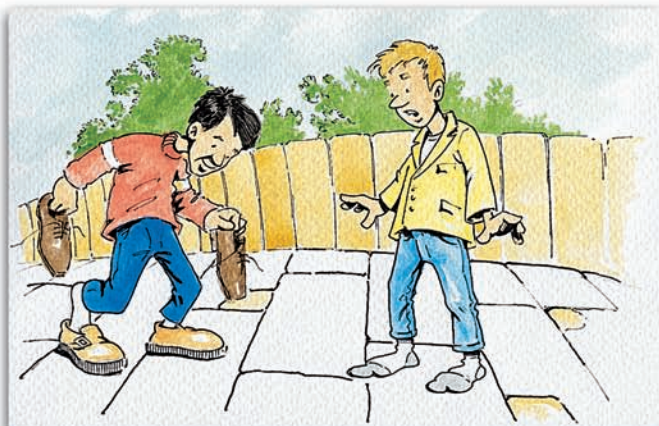


- *head over heels in love*
- *the man of her dreams*
- *all is fair in love and war*
- *to tie the knot*
- *the black sheep of the family*
- *the bee's knees*
- *to steal sb's heart*
- *to see eye to eye*
- *to drive sb round the bend*
- *blood is thicker than water*
- *the apple of sb's eye*



# Unit 3

- 1** Read the dialogue and try to explain the idioms in bold. Then, look at the picture and say which idiom it represents.



- Charles: So James, how's the business doing?  
 James: Not so good, old boy! I've been having problems with old Rumpton. I'm afraid I'm going to have to **1) give him the boot**.  
 Charles: Rumpton! But he's been running the factory for years!  
 James: Yes Charles, I know, but he's getting on a bit you know. He's sixty-two and, quite frankly, I don't think he knows what he's doing anymore. He seems to have turned into **2) a lame duck** in recent years — no control over the workforce and, well, between you and me, the company's **3) feeling the pinch**. You know our profits are down twenty per cent since last year.  
 Charles: Goodness me! You're not **4) in the red** are you?  
 James: Certainly not! We haven't **5) hit rock bottom** just yet! No, we don't owe anyone anything. We're still **6) in the black** — for now, at least.  
 Charles: Well, it sounds like you're **7) playing with fire** if you keep him for much longer! You definitely need to get somebody else to **8) step into his shoes**.  
 James: Yes, but who? I need somebody who's going to run the place with **9) a firm hand** — not take any nonsense, you know?  
 Charles: Yes, quite. Do be careful though, old chap. A hasty decision won't **10) pay dividends**, believe me!

- 2** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 1.

a in debt	f a person/company that is weak/a failure
b in credit/making profit	g to bring advantages at a later date
c to replace sb	h control and discipline
d to reach the lowest point	i to take dangerous risks
e to suffer because of lack of money	j to fire sb from their job

- 3** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*a lame duck, in the red, in the black, a firm hand, playing with fire*

- You should stop spending so much money or you'll be ..... before you know it!
- There are very few problems at this school as the headmaster governs the students with .....
- Tom's new business turned out to be ..... and he lost a lot of money.
- Gayle felt relieved when she put her wages into the bank as she was finally ..... again.
- You are ..... if you quit your job before finding another one.



- 4** Fill in the missing verbs to complete the idioms. Then, choose any three and make sentences.

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 to ..... rock bottom | 4 to ..... sb the boot    |
| 2 to ..... the pinch   | 5 to .... into sb's shoes |
| 3 to ..... dividends   |                           |

**5** Read the extract from a story and try to explain the idioms in bold.



"What? Another loan? No way, Kim. I've already given you **1) a small fortune!**" Kim shuddered as she knew her father **2) meant business** this time; she could hear it in his voice.

"But, Dad... Please! Just until I **3) get** the company **off the ground**. Once I get some orders I'll be fine... Honest!" She was desperate. Unless her father helped her out, her new clothing company would never get the chance to **4) bear fruit**. "I'm **5) living on a shoestring** already; all I get is my income support!" She could hear her father trying to interrupt, but she went on, "Listen, I've been **6) burning the midnight oil** this month and I'm exhausted, but I've figured out that just another thousand should do it. You'll see!"

"I said no, Kim," her father stated sternly. "You seem to think that I **7) am rolling in it**, but I'm not — I work hard to earn the little that I do, and to be honest, I'm not sure if I'll be able to **8) keep my head above water** if I keep lending you money." Kim fought back a sob. She couldn't believe that he would let her down.

"I'm begging you, Dad. It won't be **9) money down the drain**. Just give me a chance to show you! You'll get it all back with interest!" Kim waited nervously for her father's reply. Eventually, he answered.

"Alright love. But this is the last time. I hope that you realise that your mother and I are really going to have to **10) tighten our belts** though."

**6** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 5.

a to manage with very little money	e a lot of money
b to live on a smaller budget	f money wasted
c to be serious about what one says/intends	g to survive despite financial problems
d to work very late at night to achieve sth	h to produce good results
	i to be rich
	j to start a business/company/project, etc

**7** Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.

- During the economic crisis, even the royal family had to spend less money than usual.  
**belts** .....
- Money is so scarce at the moment that I have had to take a second job just to survive.  
**water** .....
- I knew that Ray had been working late as he looked exhausted.  
**oil** .....
- I knew that Mrs Watkin was serious when I got a letter from her lawyer.  
**business** .....
- It costs a lot of money to start a business.  
**ground** .....

**8** Fill in the phrases from the list.

*money down the drain, live on a shoestring, rolling in it, bear fruit, a small fortune*

Peter: Susan, I have the most wonderful news!

Susan: What is it? What's happened?

Peter: All the hard work we put into our formula is about to

**1).....**  
Someone wants to market it. We'll be rich. We won't have to **2) .....**  
any more.

Susan: That's wonderful, darling. I knew that it wasn't **3) .....** when we put all our savings into improving the formula. It'll earn us **4).....**

Peter: You are right, dear. Let's go out and celebrate. After all, soon we'll be **5) .....**



## 9 Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

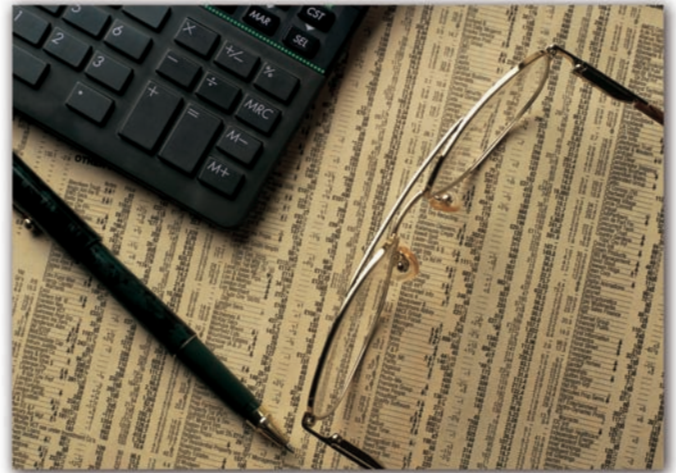
*meant business, given the boot, hit rock bottom, rolling in it, living on a shoestring, a lame duck, pay dividends, tighten her belt, step into his shoes, head above water*

- 1 With what little money I have from my savings, I can barely keep my .....
- 2 The rent on Vicky's new flat is very high, so she'll have to ..... from now on.
- 3 The long hours and hard work we put into the new company are finally beginning to .....
- 4 Ross is such an irresponsible employee; I wouldn't be surprised if he is ..... soon.
- 5 Arthur's off sick for a few months. So, Jenny, you'll have to .....
- 6 Nora's ..... as a secretary. She can't do the job and is an expense to the company.
- 7 The company ..... after all the investors suddenly pulled out.
- 8 We've been ..... all winter so that we can afford to get married in August.
- 9 The public realised that the new government ..... as soon as it raised the nation's taxes.
- 10 You could ask your boss to buy you a new company car; after all he's .....

## 10 Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.

- 1 It's a good idea to take out a small loan to help start your business.  
**ground** .....
- 2 For the first time in years, IHD Industries is making a profit.  
**black** .....
- 3 Young offenders need strict guidance to help them reform.  
**firm** .....
- 4 You'll have to work late tonight in order to finish the project.  
**oil** .....
- 5 People have been suffering financially since the government raised taxes.  
**pinch** .....
- 6 The company's investment in computer design is now producing good results.  
**fruit** .....

- 7 Money spent on the National Lottery is just money wasted.  
**drain** .....
- 8 If you're in debt, you should get another job.  
**red** .....
- 9 My family lost a huge amount of money in the stock market crash of 1929.  
**fortune** .....
- 10 You're taking a big risk if you borrow money to buy stocks and shares.  
**fire** .....



## 11 Say whether the idioms in the sentences below are used correctly or incorrectly. Then replace the incorrect idioms with a suitable alternative.

- 1 She **was given the boot** last week and now she has to find another job.
- 2 I'm afraid you're **in the black** again, Mr Jones — you owe the bank £500.
- 3 Helen was **a lame duck** when she sold her property at a great profit.
- 4 Many students **live on a shoestring** while they are at university.
- 5 In my opinion, buying a second-hand car is just **money down the drain**.
- 6 Our company finally started to **hit rock bottom** after its fourth year in business and we paid off our loan.
- 7 After Anna's father retired, she **stepped into his shoes** and became the director of the family business.
- 8 I knew my rival **tightened his belt** when I received a call from his lawyer.
- 9 You've been **playing with fire** again, haven't you? You haven't stopped yawning all morning.
- 10 We really **felt the pinch** after spending so much money on our new house.



# Unit 4

- 1** Read the review and try to explain the idioms in bold. Then, look at the picture and say which idiom it represents.



In this week's guide to eating out in the city, John Boyd reviews the hottest new restaurant in town:  
*The Stadium*

Now, here's **1) food for thought** — a restaurant-cum-sports museum. "It'll never work," I thought to myself as I made my way to ex-rugby international Ray Plum's new restaurant to join a group of friends for a birthday dinner. However, as soon as I stepped through the door into the delicious food smells, which certainly **2) whetted my appetite**, and the fantastic décor, which consisted entirely of sport's memorabilia from floor to ceiling, I was **3) at a loss for words**!

We were ushered to our table by a friendly waiter who then left us to look at the menu. The dish descriptions **4) made our mouths water** and soon we were enjoying our meal. The chef clearly hadn't **5) cut any corners**, as the ingredients were of the highest quality.

Later on in the evening, when the birthday celebrations were **6) in full swing**, I managed to **7) pull a few strings** to see the kitchen as I knew the manager's son. I have to say that other chefs **8) cannot hold a candle to** the way in which *The Stadium's* chef runs his kitchen.

Shortly before we left, our birthday girl insisted on **9) picking up the tab**. I was pleasantly surprised, on taking a peek at the total, to calculate that it had only come to £12 per person.

I for one shall certainly be paying another visit to *The Stadium* just to **10) feast my eyes on** the décor, the fantastic old sporting photos and memorabilia. It is certainly a place well worth visiting.

- 2** Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 1.

a to make sb keen to experience/taste more of sth	f unable to think of anything to say
b to use a cheaper/easier method	g to cause sb to desire sth, especially food
c at a very lively stage/point	h cannot be compared favourably with sb/sth
d to look with pleasure at sth/sb	i to use influence to achieve sth
e to pay for sth	j sth to think about

- 3** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*at a loss for words, cut corners, picking up the tab, hold a candle to, whet my appetite*

- Paul ..... when building his new house and now he is having trouble with it.
- The new managing director can't ..... his predecessor.
- Mary was ..... when her boss asked her if she'd like to be promoted.
- I've only read the back of the book, but it was enough to .....
- Vanessa's parents are ..... for her trip to Europe next summer.

- 4** Fill in the gaps with phrases from the list:

*food for thought, feast your eyes on, make your mouth water, pull a few strings, in full swing*

Helen: So how was Angela's wedding?

Fiona: Brilliant. Her dress was something to **1)** .....

Helen: And the reception?

Fiona: It was quite impressive. Fortunately, Tony's dad knows the manager of *The Grand*, so he was able to **2)** ..... and arrange to hold the reception there for half the normal price. You know, the menu alone was enough to **3)** .....! Unfortunately, I had to leave while the party was still **4)** ..... as I had to get up early for work the next morning — but it's certainly given me **5)** ..... for my own wedding!



**5 Read the dialogue and try to explain the idioms in bold.**



Celia: Hi Rachel.  
 Rachel: Celia! How was your blind date last night?  
 Celia: Awful! Roger definitely **1) wasn't my cup of tea**. I don't know why Karen thought I'd like him. Personally I think she was **2) scraping the bottom of the barrel** — he was incredibly rude, quite horrid, actually!  
 Rachel: Oh dear. What happened?  
 Celia: Well, we'd arranged to meet at the *King's Head* for a drink first, you know, to **3) break the ice**. I should have realised I was **4) in the soup** when I heard him speaking to the barmaid — he was so impolite I blushed! And the way he kept shovelling peanuts into his mouth and talking at the same time **5) turned my stomach**.  
 Rachel: Urgh! How awful!  
 Celia: Oh, that wasn't all! I'd made a real effort with my hair and make-up and I'd even bought a new dress. He didn't say anything about how nice I looked — talk about **6) casting pearls before swine**! And then, just before we left, he knocked my glass of red wine all over me, and do you know what he said? **7) "It's no use crying over spilt milk."** I should have left there and then! He criticised my car all the way to the restaurant too, said it was uncomfortable and didn't go fast enough, but when I asked him what he drove, he said he didn't!  
 Rachel: Sounds like **8) sour grapes** to me.  
 Celia: Quite. Anyway at the restaurant, he started complaining that the meat was **9) as dry as a bone** — it was delicious — and that the service wasn't **10) up to scratch** — it was faultless.  
 Rachel: So what did you do?  
 Celia: Well I left, didn't I?

**6 Match the items with the idioms from Ex. 5.**

a not to be to one's taste	f there is no point in regretting sth that has happened
b to offer sth good to sb who cannot appreciate the value of it	g to cause sb to feel sick/disgusted
c negative attitude/bitterness because of jealousy	h of the desired standard
d to be left with/use the worst person/object	i to make sb relax/to get conversation started
e in trouble	j very dry

**7 Rewrite the following sentences using the words in bold. Do not change these words in any way.**

- I've been going to the same restaurant for years, but lately it hasn't been up to the standard it should be.  
**scratch** .....
- Camping in the wilderness doesn't appeal to Greg.  
**cup** .....
- You forgot to water my plants! Look, the soil is very dry.  
**bone** .....
- Ross was nervous when he went for his job interview, but the director put him at ease by making a joke.  
**ice** .....
- Roxanne was in trouble when she crashed her father's car.  
**soup** .....

**8 Choose the word which best completes each sentence.**

- The thought of eating raw fish turns my .....  
A head B stomach C legs D belly
- Jessica was scraping the bottom of the ..... for an excuse saying she had a hairdresser's appointment.  
A glass B pitcher C jug D barrel
- Daisy says she didn't want to be chosen, but it's just sour .....; she did really.  
A grapes B lemons C raisins D milk
- Harold realised too late that he had sold the van too cheaply; but there was no point in ..... over spilt milk.  
A sobbing B weeping C screaming D crying

- 5 Steven tried to teach his son to appreciate opera, but he was just ..... pearls before swine.  
A hurling B casting C throwing D tossing

**9 Fill in the missing verbs to complete the idioms. Then, choose any five and make sentences.**

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 to ..... the ice             | 6 to ..... sb's stomach             |
| 2 to ..... one's appetite      | 7 to ..... sb's mouth water         |
| 3 to ..... one's eyes on       | 8 to ..... the bottom of the barrel |
| 4 to ..... the tab             | 9 to ..... a few strings            |
| 5 to ..... pearls before swine | 10 to ..... corners                 |

**10 Complete the sentences using a suitable idiom. Keep the meaning the same as in the given sentence.**

- Unfortunately, the electricity went off at the best part of the concert.  
Unfortunately, the electricity went off when the concert was.....
- Tim didn't know what to say when he heard he had won the prize.  
Tim was ..... when he heard he had won the prize.
- If you're having problems with your landlord, you can come and stay with me.  
If you're ..... with your landlord, you can come and stay with me.
- Charles Johnson's new film will certainly give you something to think about.  
Charles Johnson's new film will certainly be .....
- I don't like abstract art; I think it's ugly.  
Abstract art is .....; I think it's ugly.
- The soil here gets little water so no plants can grow.  
The soil here is ..... so no plants can grow.
- My teacher told me that my essay wasn't good enough.  
My teacher told me that my essay wasn't .....
- Jane said that she hated my new dress, but I'm sure she would have loved to have one just like it.

Jane said that she hated my new dress, but I'm sure it was just .....

- This new government is nowhere near as good as the previous one.  
This new government can't ..... the previous one.
- When his bike was stolen, Mike said it wasn't worth grieving over.  
When his bike was stolen, Mike said it was .....

**11 a) Look at the pictures below and say which idioms are represented.**



**b) Now, use the idioms to complete the following sentences.**

- James knew he would be ..... when he realised he was an hour late for the rendezvous.
- Kim said Clara's new earrings made her look silly, but it was just ..... because Clara would have loved to have a pair herself.
- When we went to summer camp, there was a party on the first night to help .....
- That cake smells delicious. It's really .....
- My family don't appreciate art so it was like ..... when I took them to the Monet exhibition.
- If you ..... when building a house, it will not be safe to live in.