

LESSON 1

BOB'S DAY AT WORK

Bob works as a manager in a furniture store. Peter, his boss, is not happy about sales. Bob's new advertising campaign hasn't helped. Peter decides to fire him.

Peter: Bob, I hate to **break the news**, but our sales were down again last month.

Bob: Down again, Peter?

Peter: Yeah. These days, everybody's shopping at our competition, Honest Abe's Furniture Store.

Bob: But everything in there **costs an arm and a leg!**

Peter: That's true. They do charge **top dollar**.

Bob: And their salespeople are very strange. They really **give me the creeps!**

Peter: Well, they must be doing something right over there. Meanwhile, we're **about to go belly-up**.

Bob: I'm sorry to hear that. I thought my new advertising campaign would **save the day**.

Peter: **Let's face it:** your advertising campaign was a **real flop**.

Bob: Well then I'll **go back to the drawing board**.

Peter: It's too late for that. You're fired!

Bob: What? You're **giving me the ax**?

Peter: Yes. I've already found a new manager. She's as **sharp as a tack**.

Bob: Can't we even **talk this over**? **After all**, I've been working here for 10 years!

Peter: There's **no point in** arguing, Bob. I've already **made up my mind**.

Bob: Oh well, **at least** I won't have to **put up with** your nonsense anymore! Good-bye to you and good-bye to this **dead-end job**.

Peter: Please leave before I **lose my temper**!



IDIOMS – LESSON 1

about to – ready to; on the verge of

EXAMPLE 1: It's a good thing Bob left the furniture store when he did. Peter was so angry, he was **about to** throw a dining room chair at him.

EXAMPLE 2: I'm glad you're finally home. I was just **about to** have dinner without you.

after all – despite everything; when everything has been considered; the fact is

EXAMPLE 1: You'd better invite Ed to your party. **After all**, he's a good friend.

EXAMPLE 2: It doesn't matter what your boss thinks of you. **After all**, you're going to quit your job anyway.

at least – anyway; the *good* thing is that...

EXAMPLE 1: We've run out of coffee, but **at least** we still have tea.

EXAMPLE 2: Tracy can't afford to buy a car, but **at least** she has a good bicycle.

NOTE: The second definition of this phrase is "no less than": There were **at least** 300 people waiting in line to buy concert tickets.

(to) break the news – to make something known

EXAMPLE 1: Samantha and Michael are getting married, but they haven't yet **broken the news** to their parents.

EXAMPLE 2: You'd better **break the news** to your father carefully. After all, you don't want him to have a heart attack!

(to) cost an arm and a leg – to be very expensive

EXAMPLE 1: A college education in America **costs an arm and a leg**.

EXAMPLE 2: All of the furniture at Honest Abe's **costs an arm and a leg!**

dead-end job – a job that won't lead to anything else

EXAMPLE 1: Diane realized that working as a cashier was a **dead-end job**.

EXAMPLE 2: Jim worked many **dead-end jobs** before finally deciding to start his own business.

(let's) face it – accept a difficult reality

EXAMPLE 1: **Let's face it**, if Ted spent more time studying, he wouldn't be failing so many of his classes!

EXAMPLE 2: **Let's face it**, if you don't have a college degree, it can be difficult to find a high-paying job.

(to) give one the creeps – to create a feeling of disgust or horror

EXAMPLE 1: Ted's friend Matt has seven earrings in each ear and an "I Love Mom" tattoo on his arm. He really **gives Nicole the creeps**.

EXAMPLE 2: There was a strange man following me around the grocery store. He was **giving me the creeps!**

(to) go back to the drawing board – to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning

EXAMPLE 1: Frank's new business failed, so he had to **go back to the drawing board**.

EXAMPLE 2: The president didn't agree with our new ideas for the company, so we had to **go back to the drawing board**.

(to) go belly-up – to go bankrupt

EXAMPLE 1: Many people lost their jobs when Enron **went belly-up**.

EXAMPLE 2: My company lost \$3 million last year. We might go **belly-up**.

(to) give someone the ax – to fire someone

EXAMPLE 1: Mary used to talk to her friends on the phone all day at work, until one day her boss finally **gave her the ax**.

EXAMPLE 2: Poor Paul! He was **given the ax** two days before Christmas.

(to) lose one's temper – to become very angry

EXAMPLE 1: Bob always **loses his temper** when his kids start talking on the telephone during dinner.

EXAMPLE 2: When Ted handed in his essay two weeks late, his teacher really **lost her temper**.

(to) make up one's mind – to reach a decision; to decide

EXAMPLE 1: Stephanie couldn't **make up her mind** whether to attend Harvard or Stanford. Finally, she chose Stanford.

EXAMPLE 2: Do you want an omelette or fried eggs? You'll need to **make up your mind** quickly because the waitress is coming.

no point in – no reason to; it's not worth (doing something)

EXAMPLE 1: There's **no point in** worrying about things you can't change.

EXAMPLE 2: There's **no point in** going on a picnic if it's going to rain.

(to) put up with – to endure without complaint

EXAMPLE 1: For many years, Barbara **put up with** her husband's annoying behavior. Finally, she decided to leave him.

EXAMPLE 2: I don't know how Len **puts up with** his mean boss every day.

real flop or flop – a failure

EXAMPLE 1: The Broadway play closed after just 4 days – it was a **real flop!**

EXAMPLE 2: The company was in trouble after its new product **flopped**.

(to) save the day – to prevent a disaster or misfortune

EXAMPLE 1: The Christmas tree was on fire, but Ted threw water on it and **saved the day**.

EXAMPLE 2: We forgot to buy champagne for our New Year's party, but Sonia brought some and really **saved the day!**

(as) sharp as a tack – very intelligent

EXAMPLE 1: Jay scored 100% on his science test. He's as **sharp as a tack**.

EXAMPLE 2: Anna got a scholarship to Yale. She's as **sharp as a tack**.

(to) talk over – to discuss

EXAMPLE 1: Dave and I spent hours **talking over** the details of the plan.

EXAMPLE 2: Before you make any big decisions, give me a call and we'll **talk things over**.

top dollar – the highest end of a price range; a lot of money

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole paid **top dollar** for a shirt at Banana Republic.

EXAMPLE 2: Wait until those jeans go on sale. Why pay **top dollar**?

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) I can't believe you bought a couch at Honest Abe's. Everything in that store costs an arm and a _____.
a) foot b) leg c) hand
- 2) After Bob found out that his advertising campaign failed, he wanted to go back to the drawing _____.
a) board b) table c) room
- 3) When somebody isn't listening to you, there's no _____ in trying to argue with them.
a) edge b) tip c) point
- 4) José is really smart. He's as sharp as a _____.
a) tack b) nail c) screw
- 5) The salespeople at Honest Abe's always look angry and never speak to anybody. No wonder they _____ Bob the creeps.
a) take b) give c) allow
- 6) Bob got fired. He isn't looking forward to _____ the news to his family.
a) breaking b) cracking c) saying
- 7) Bob thought his new advertisements would bring in lots of customers and save the _____.
a) morning b) night c) day
- 8) Fortunately, Bob no longer has to put _____ with his stupid boss at the furniture store.
a) over b) in c) up

ANSWERS TO LESSON 1, p. 160

What's
the
matter?

I got
canned
today!

