

## LESSON 19

# NICOLE'S CLOSE ELECTION

*Nicole loses the election at school. She doesn't want to accept it, so she looks for excuses. Ted encourages her to accept defeat and move on.*

*Nicole:* I lost the election **by a hair** — just 10 votes! But I'm not **giving up**.

*Ted:* **Give me a break**, Nicole. You lost. **Live with it!**

*Nicole:* But I was a **sure thing!** If I hadn't stayed up so late baking cookies, I wouldn't have **messed up** my speech.

*Ted:* **Get real**, Nicole.

*Nicole:* It's your fault, Ted. I lost because your friends didn't vote for me!

*Ted:* Don't try to **put the blame on me!** I gave it **my best shot**.

*Nicole:* They must've made a mistake while counting the votes. I'll demand a re-count on Monday and **set the record straight**.

*Ted:* Don't **make a fool of yourself**, Nicole. **Face it**, Andrea won the election **fair and square!**

*Nicole:* Well, I just don't know where I **went wrong**.

*Susan:* Here, take a chocolate chip cookie. That'll **cheer you up for sure!**



## IDIOMS – LESSON 19

**by a hair** – just barely; very narrowly; by a small amount

EXAMPLE 1: Larry won the bicycle race **by a hair**. The second-place winner came in just a second behind him.

EXAMPLE 2: Was the tennis ball in or out? I think it was out **by a hair**. You know the old saying: “When in doubt, call it out!”

**(to) cheer up** – *see Lesson 6*

**Face it** – *see Lesson 1*

**fair and square** – honestly

EXAMPLE 1: Did George Bush win the 2000 presidential election **fair and square**? That depends on whether you ask a Democrat or a Republican!

EXAMPLE 2: Tony won the ping pong tournament **fair and square**.

**for sure** – definitely

EXAMPLE 1: This year, Tom Cruise will win an Academy Award **for sure**.

EXAMPLE 2: Mike is the most popular guy in school. If he runs for student body president, he'll win **for sure**.

**Get real** – *see Lesson 3*

**(to) give it one's best shot** – to try as hard as one can

EXAMPLE 1: Courtney lost the race, but at least she **gave it her best shot**.

EXAMPLE 2: I know you're nervous about the interview. Just **give it your best shot** and see what happens.

**give me a break** – *see Lesson 14*

**(to) give up** – to admit defeat; to surrender

EXAMPLE 1: Bill **gave up** golf after realizing he'd never be good at it.

EXAMPLE 2: I know you're 100 points ahead of me, but I still might win the Scrabble game. I'm not **giving up** yet!

**(to) go wrong** – to make a mistake; to go astray; to malfunction; to work incorrectly

EXAMPLE 1: Follow the directions I gave you, and you can't **go wrong**.

EXAMPLE 2: Something **went wrong** with my neighbor's car alarm system, and the alarm wouldn't stop ringing all night.

**(to) live with it** – to accept a difficult reality

EXAMPLE 1: Your boss is an idiot. **Live with it**.

EXAMPLE 2: Your hair will never be straight. Just **live with it!**

NOTE: There is also the expression "to learn to live with it," which means to get used to something annoying or difficult. Example: Sandra knew that Roger would always throw his dirty clothes on the floor. She'd just have to **learn to live with it**.

**(to) make a fool of oneself** – to cause oneself to look stupid

EXAMPLE 1: Dan drank too much and then **made a fool of himself**.

EXAMPLE 2: Please stop arguing with me in front of all these people. You're **making a fool of yourself!**

**(to) mess up** – to make a mistake; to spoil an opportunity

EXAMPLE 1: Amber **messed up** and put salt instead of sugar in the cookies.

EXAMPLE 2: Ted really **messed up** on his chemistry test. He got a "D."

SYNONYM: screw up [slang]

**(to) put the blame on (someone)** – to name somebody else as responsible for a misdeed or misfortune

EXAMPLE 1: Mrs. Lopez **put the blame on** her husband for losing their life savings in the stock market.

EXAMPLE 2: Don't **put the blame on me** that your plants died while you were on vacation. You forgot to tell me to water them!

**(to) set the record straight** – to correct an inaccurate account

EXAMPLE 1: Ken knew his father was innocent, and he hoped he could **set the record straight** one day.

EXAMPLE 2: Let me **set the record straight**. I won the last game.

**sure thing** – an outcome that is assured

EXAMPLE 1: Gary bet all his money on a horse named Trixie, thinking she was a **sure thing**.

EXAMPLE 2: Nicole has a good chance of getting accepted to Yale, but it's still not a **sure thing**.

## PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

*Ted is angry at Nicole because she didn't do a good job on his chemistry homework. Fill in the blanks using the following idioms:*

**give me a break**

**sure thing**

**put the blame on me**

**give it my best shot**

**cheer you up**

**for sure**

**live with it**

**messed up**

*Ted:* Nicole, my teacher gave me back my chemistry homework. I got a terrible grade! I thought \_\_\_\_\_ you'd help me get an "A+."

*Nicole:* I'm sorry. I really did \_\_\_\_\_, but I guess it wasn't good enough.

*Ted:* Not good enough? That's right. You really \_\_\_\_\_!

*Nicole:* You never should've asked me to do your homework. Don't try to \_\_\_\_\_ for your bad grades.

*Ted:* Yes, my mistake. I thought you were a \_\_\_\_\_!

*Nicole:* So you'll get a bad grade in chemistry. Just learn to \_\_\_\_\_. Here, take one of Mom's cookies. It'll help \_\_\_\_\_.

*Ted:* You think a stupid cookie will cheer me up? \_\_\_\_\_!

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