

LESSON 20

BOB GETS AN ANGRY CALL FROM CAROL

Carol calls Bob to tell him that a customer found a hair in her cookie. Bob wants Carol to forget about this, but Carol thinks it's very serious. She refuses to buy any more cookies from Bob.

Carol: Bob, a lady came into the Village Market today **ranting and raving**.

Bob: Oh yeah? What happened?

Carol: She found a blue hair in her chocolate chip cookie!

Bob: Aha. I can see how she'd be **taken aback**.

Carol: Does anybody in your family have blue hair?

Bob: **As a matter of fact**, my son's girlfriend Amber has blue hair.

Carol: Bob, I can't sell your cookies anymore.

Bob: Aren't you **blowing things out of proportion**?

Carol: The health department would **throw the book at me** if they **found out** about this.

Bob: Couldn't we just **sweep this under the rug**?

Carol: No. This is too serious.

Bob: But I was just **getting a handle on** the cookie business. Now what will I do? I don't have any other way of **making a living**!

Carol: **My heart goes out to you**, Bob, but you need to **get your act together**. I want to sell *chocolate chip* cookies, not *hair* cookies!

Bob: I guess I just **knocked myself out** for the past week for nothing.

Carol: Clearly!



IDIOMS – LESSON 20

as a matter of fact – in fact; actually

EXAMPLE 1: We need more milk? **As a matter of fact**, I was just going to ask you to go shopping.

EXAMPLE 2: This isn't the first time Andy has gotten in trouble at school. **As a matter of fact**, just last month he was suspended for an entire week.

(to) blow things out of proportion – to exaggerate; to make more of something than one should

EXAMPLE 1: They sent a 12 year-old boy to jail for biting his babysitter? Don't you think they're **blowing things out of proportion**?

EXAMPLE 2: Sally called the police when her neighbor's party got too loud. I think that was **blowing things out of proportion**.

SYNONYM: To make a mountain out of a molehill

(to) find out – to learn; to discover

EXAMPLE 1: Al is calling the theater to **find out** what time the movie starts.

EXAMPLE 2: David had a big party at his house while his parents were away on vacation. Fortunately for him, they never **found out**.

(to) get a handle on – to gain an understanding of

EXAMPLE 1: This new computer program is very difficult. I still haven't **gotten a handle on** it.

EXAMPLE 2: Once you **get a handle on** how the game works, please explain it to everybody else.

(to) get one's act together – to get organized; to start operating more effectively

EXAMPLE 1: If Ted **gets his act together** now, he might be able to get into a good college.

EXAMPLE 2: We'd better **get our act together**. Otherwise, we're going to miss our flight.

(to) knock oneself out – to work very hard at something (sometimes too hard)

EXAMPLE 1: Ted **knocked himself out** getting votes for Nicole, and she didn't even say thank you.

EXAMPLE 2: I really **knocked myself out** getting these free concert tickets for you and your girlfriend. I hope you appreciate it.

NOTE: "Don't knock yourself out!" means don't work too hard at something or for someone; it's not worth it. Example: **Don't knock yourself out** for Jeremy — he won't appreciate it anyway!

(to) make a living – see *Lesson 11*

one's heart goes out to (someone) – to feel sorry for someone

EXAMPLE 1: **My heart goes out to the Richardsons**. Their home was destroyed in a fire.

EXAMPLE 2: Naomi's **heart went out to all the people** who lost their jobs when the auto plant shut down.

(to) rant and rave – to talk loudly, often in anger

EXAMPLE 1: A customer in the video rental store was **ranting and raving** that the DVD he rented was broken.

EXAMPLE 2: Please stop **ranting and raving!** Let's discuss this issue in a calm manner.

(to) sweep (something) under the rug – to hide something, often a scandal

EXAMPLE 1: "Senator, don't try to **sweep it under the rug**. Everybody knows about your affair with the intern."

EXAMPLE 2: Let's just **sweep this incident under the rug** and move on.

taken aback – surprised (almost always in a negative sense)

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole was **taken aback** when her friend Rosa told her she no longer wanted to hang out with her.

EXAMPLE 2: I was **taken aback** when my friend asked me if she could borrow my toothbrush because she forgot hers at home.

(to) throw the book at someone – to punish or chide severely

EXAMPLE 1: When Ted failed his chemistry test the second time, his teacher really **threw the book at him**.

EXAMPLE 2: The judge **threw the book at Matt** for stealing a football from the store. He'll be going to jail for six months.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase in bold:

- 1) After Nicole lost the election, she started **ranting and raving**.
 - a) complaining loudly
 - b) speaking quietly
 - c) asking many questions
- 2) When a stranger approached me on the bus and asked to borrow my cell phone, I was **taken aback**.
 - a) disappointed
 - b) surprised
 - c) delighted
- 3) When George showed up for work five minutes late, his boss Beth threatened to fire him. Beth is known for **blowing things out of proportion**.
 - a) making a big deal out of small things
 - b) lying
 - c) creating extra work for someone
- 4) My apartment is always messy. I need to **get my act together** and start cleaning it once a week.
 - a) start pretending
 - b) gather a group of people together
 - c) get organized

- 5) **My heart goes out to** all the homeless people lying outside my apartment building in February.
- I help
 - I feel sorry for
 - I feel good about
- 6) I just **found out** yesterday that Amber never washes her hands before making cookies. Ted told me.
- saw
 - overheard
 - learned
- 7) The judge is going to **throw the book at Jim** for robbing several houses.
- release Jim from jail
 - charge Jim with an offense
 - read to Jim
- 8) Ted's chemistry homework was much more difficult than Nicole had expected. She just couldn't seem to **get a handle on it**.
- finish it
 - understand it
 - hold it in her hands

ANSWERS TO LESSON 20, p. 165



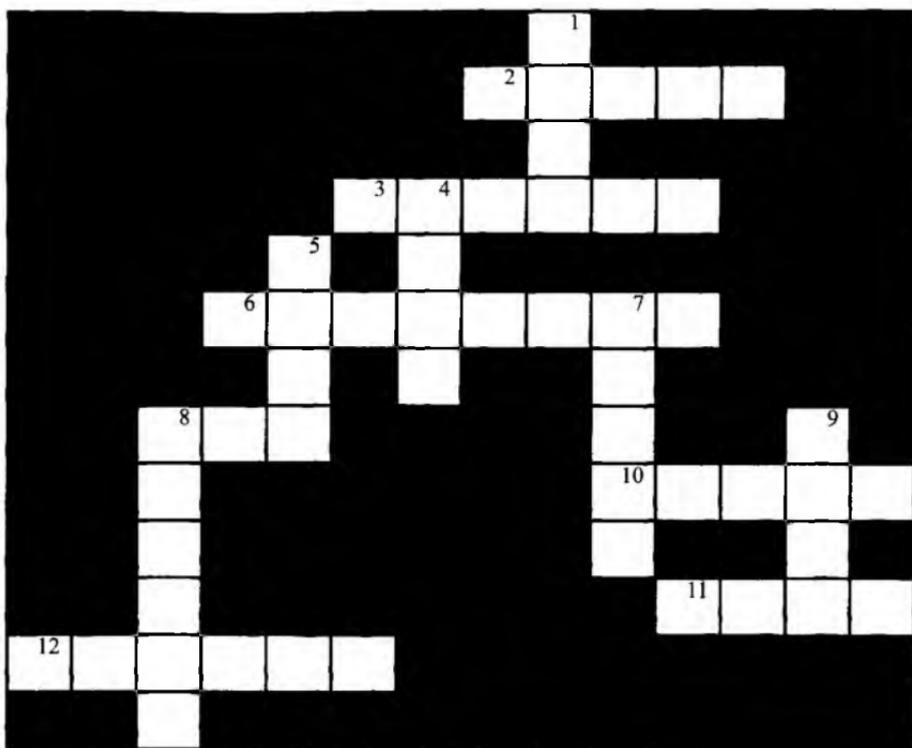
Review for Lessons 16-20

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word:

- 1) My aunt and uncle are really sitting _____. They made a lot of money in the stock market.
- a) rich b) poor c) pretty

- 2) Lighten ____! You need to stop taking your job so seriously.
a) it b) up c) over
- 3) After a week, my houseguests really started to get ____ my nerves. They made long-distance phone calls to Singapore, drank all my wine, and slept until noon every day.
a) by b) in c) on
- 4) Amber likes to stay up past midnight every night. She's what you'd call a ____ owl.
a) night b) busy c) day
- 5) Mildred thought she'd have trouble remembering to take her pills. But now, after ten months, it's ____ nature.
a) first b) second c) third
- 6) Susan messed ____ and left the cookies in the oven for 25 minutes too long. They were ruined.
a) up b) over c) away
- 7) Andrea didn't cheat. She won the election fair and ____.
a) easily b) circle c) square
- 8) Bob didn't know anything about baking when he and Susan started selling cookies, but he quickly learned the ____.
a) chains b) ropes c) strings
- 9) Ted and his friends were fooling ____ in the chemistry laboratory when they accidentally started a fire.
a) around b) about c) away
- 10) Mary's daughter wanted the new Harry Potter book. But by the time they got to the bookstore, it was already sold ____.
a) out b) in c) away

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

2. Senator Brown's re-election would have been a sure ____ if he hadn't gotten caught stealing candy at Wal-Mart.
3. Chad is sitting _____. He just won the lottery.
6. Nicole had to burn the ____ oil to finish her English paper by the morning.
8. When Ted was caught copying his friend's math homework, his teacher wasn't willing to sweep it under the _____.
10. It takes time to learn the ____ when you start a new job.
11. Once you do it a few times, riding a unicycle is a piece of _____.
12. My friend's dog kept licking my hand. It was getting on my _____.

Down

1. Carly is a real big _____. She runs a large corporation.
4. Some people in restaurants like to ____ and rave when their soup is too cold.
5. I tried to give my friend a ____ this morning, but she wasn't home. I got her answering machine.
7. My ____ goes out to people who live in America, but don't speak any English.
8. Martha Stewart tried to set the ____ straight during her television interview with Barbara Walters.
9. Filling out tax forms is a pain in the _____.

ANSWERS TO REVIEW, p. 166

**We'd like to
sell your cookies all
over the country.**

