

MAIN CHARACTERS

The author would like to thank the Johnson family for graciously agreeing to appear in this book.

The Johnson Family

Ted (son)

Bob (father)

Nicole (daughter)



Susan (mother)

Good-bye to
you and good-bye
to this dead-end
job!



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

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