

## MAIN CHARACTERS

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

### The Johnson Family





## 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 non-sense 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.

<p><b>(to) break the news</b> – to make something known</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Samantha and Michael are getting married, but they haven't yet <b>broken the news</b> to their parents.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: You'd better <b>break the news</b> to your father carefully. After all, you don't want him to have a heart attack!</p>
<p><b>(to) cost an arm and a leg</b> – to be very expensive</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: A college education in America <b>costs an arm and a leg</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: All of the furniture at Honest Abe's <b>costs an arm and a leg!</b></p>
<p><b>dead-end job</b> – a job that won't lead to anything else</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Diane realized that working as a cashier was a <b>dead-end job</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Jim worked many <b>dead-end jobs</b> before finally deciding to start his own business.</p>
<p><b>(let's) face it</b> – accept a difficult reality</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: <b>Let's face it</b>, if Ted spent more time studying, he wouldn't be failing so many of his classes!</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: <b>Let's face it</b>, if you don't have a college degree, it can be difficult to find a high-paying job.</p>
<p><b>(to) give one the creeps</b> – to create a feeling of disgust or horror</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Ted's friend Matt has seven earrings in each ear and an "I Love Mom" tattoo on his arm. He really <b>gives Nicole the creeps</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: There was a strange man following me around the grocery store. He was <b>giving me the creeps!</b></p>
<p><b>(to) go back to the drawing board</b> – to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Frank's new business failed, so he had to <b>go back to the drawing board</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: The president didn't agree with our new ideas for the company, so we had to <b>go back to the drawing board</b>.</p>
<p><b>(to) go belly-up</b> – to go bankrupt</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Many people lost their jobs when Enron <b>went belly-up</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: My company lost \$3 million last year. We might go <b>belly-up</b>.</p>
<p><b>(to) give someone the ax</b> – to fire someone</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Mary used to talk to her friends on the phone all day at work, until one day her boss finally <b>gave her the ax</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Poor Paul! He was <b>given the ax</b> two days before Christmas.</p>

<p><b>(to) lose one's temper</b> – to become very angry</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Bob always <b>loses his temper</b> when his kids start talking on the telephone during dinner.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: When Ted handed in his essay two weeks late, his teacher really <b>lost her temper</b>.</p>
<p><b>(to) make up one's mind</b> – to reach a decision; to decide</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Stephanie couldn't <b>make up her mind</b> whether to attend Harvard or Stanford. Finally, she chose Stanford.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Do you want an omelette or fried eggs? You'll need to <b>make up your mind</b> quickly because the waitress is coming.</p>
<p><b>no point in</b> – no reason to; it's not worth (doing something)</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: There's <b>no point in</b> worrying about things you can't change.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: There's <b>no point in</b> going on a picnic if it's going to rain.</p>
<p><b>(to) put up with</b> – to endure without complaint</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: For many years, Barbara <b>put up with</b> her husband's annoying behavior. Finally, she decided to leave him.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: I don't know how Len <b>puts up with</b> his mean boss every day.</p>
<p><b>real flop or flop</b> – a failure</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: The Broadway play closed after just 4 days – it was a <b>real flop!</b></p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: The company was in trouble after its new product <b>flopped</b>.</p>
<p><b>(to) save the day</b> – to prevent a disaster or misfortune</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: The Christmas tree was on fire, but Ted threw water on it and <b>saved the day</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: We forgot to buy champagne for our New Year's party, but Sonia brought some and really <b>saved the day!</b></p>
<p><b>(as) sharp as a tack</b> – very intelligent</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Jay scored 100% on his science test. He's as <b>sharp as a tack</b>.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Anna got a scholarship to Yale. She's as <b>sharp as a tack</b>.</p>
<p><b>(to) talk over</b> – to discuss</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Dave and I spent hours <b>talking over</b> the details of the plan.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Before you make any big decisions, give me a call and we'll <b>talk things over</b>.</p>
<p><b>top dollar</b> – the highest end of a price range; a lot of money</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1: Nicole paid <b>top dollar</b> for a shirt at Banana Republic.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 2: Wait until those jeans go on sale. Why pay <b>top dollar?</b></p>

## 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*