



Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

ear | clue | hang | picture | stick | area

- 1 I soon began to get the _____ of the new filing system.
- 2 Anna doesn't have a _____ how to talk to children.
- 3 The difference between telling a lie and not telling the whole truth is a grey _____.
- 4 I thought she was paying for dinner but I must have got the wrong end of the _____.
- 5 Brad tried to remember the directions but they seemed to have gone in one _____ and out the other.
- 6 The inspector spent a few minutes with the victim and soon began to get the _____.

Exercise 2

Match sentence halves 1–6 with A–F to make complete sentences.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 We saw them together in the restaurant and it was so easy to | A read between the lines. |
| 2 I've told them I'm a vegetarian many times but they just don't | B take it on board. |
| 3 The real skill of being an agony aunt is being able to | C had put two and two together and made five. |
| 4 I've learnt a lot about the new regulations and I'll run a training day to | D jump to conclusions. |
| 5 The international dateline is an idea I've never been able to | E get my head around. |
| 6 Unfortunately, the children were disappointed; they | F bring you all up to speed. |

Exercise 3

Complete the sentences. Choose the best answers.

- 1 Then you click 'save' and move the file to here. Do you *read between the lines* / *get the picture* / *put two and two together*?
- 2 It's going to take me a couple of days to *get up to speed* / *the picture* / *the wrong end of the stick* with the new project.
- 3 This is a very difficult exercise. I just can't *jump to conclusions* / *go in one ear and out the other* / *get my head round it*.
- 4 Don't worry. You'll soon *get the hang of it* / *jump to conclusions* / *get the wrong end of the stick*.
- 5 Listen to all the evidence and don't *take it on board* / *jump to conclusions* / *get your head around it*.
- 6 Adam shook his head; he didn't *put two and two together* / *read between the lines* / *have a clue* how to fix this.

Exercise 4

Replace the underlined words with the correct idioms in the box.

get hold of the wrong end of the stick | get the hang of it | get the picture
go in one ear and out the other | haven't got a clue | read between the lines

- 1 You don't have to explain it anymore. I understand the situation.
- 2 He doesn't listen carefully, and tends to misunderstand.
- 3 I don't think I'll be able to do the accounts. I know nothing about book keeping.
- 4 They haven't actually said anything is wrong, but I can sense it.
- 5 It's difficult at first, but after a bit of practice, you learn how to do it.
- 6 You have to repeat everything to them. Whatever you say will be forgotten immediately afterwards!

Exercise 5

Use sentences A–F to answer questions 1–6.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Whose company has adopted a new way of working? 2 Who is surprised at how strict his working conditions are becoming? 3 Who thinks he will soon have a new boss? 4 Who is improving his expertise at work? 5 Who is expecting to benefit from recent events? 6 Who wants to work for a different company? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Veejay feels he hasn't a clue how to find a better employer. B Nik is getting himself up to speed on the new tax law. C Khalid leapt to the conclusion that the CEO would now resign. D Stefan's firm has really taken the idea of teleworking on board. E Cheng put two and two together and hoped this would mean a promotion for him. F Xavier can't get his head around all the new rules in the office. |
|--|---|

Exercise 6

Complete the table. Put the idioms in the correct groups.

not have a clue | get your head around something | get the wrong end of the stick | a grey area
up to speed | take something on board | read between the lines | jump to conclusions
get the hang of something | get the picture | put two and two together | go in one ear and out the other

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| understanding correctly | 1 _____ |
| | 2 _____ |
| | 3 _____ |
| | 4 _____ |
| | 5 _____ |
| | 6 _____ |
| | 7 _____ |
| not understanding | 1 _____ |
| | 2 _____ |
| | 3 _____ |
| | 4 _____ |
| | 5 _____ |

Your turn!

Think about learning experiences you or people around you have had recently. Use the idioms in this unit to talk about them. For example:

I finally managed to get my head around how a car engine works.

My parents still haven't got the hang of text messaging.



The assistant chef had got the wrong end of the stick.