IDIOM

UNIT 3

Exercise 1

Match phrases 1–8 with A–H to make idioms from this unit.

1 go off at
2 get your wires
3 to be
4 keep someone
5 spill
6 touch
7 let the cat out of
8 put someone in

A the bag
B base
C a tangent
D the beans
E the picture
F posted
G at cross purposes
H crossed

Exercise 2

Complete the sentences with the words in the box. Some of the sentences have more than one answer.

out	from	at	in	off	on

1 Keep me _____ the loop, will you?
2 I wish she wouldn't keep going off _____ a tangent.
3 We heard a rumour _____ the grapevine.
4 Let me put you _____ the picture.
5 I heard all this straight _____ the horse's mouth.
6 I think they were arguing _____ cross purposes there.
7 She promised me she wouldn't let the cat _____ of the bag.
8 She really came _____ of her shell when the singing started.

Exercise 3

Re-order the phrases to make sentences. Add punctuation where necessary.

1 true / it must be / here in black and white / because it's
2 as you develop / keep me / the idea / in the loop
3 every week to / touch base / we meet / have lunch and
4 was moving / that the discussion /off on a tangent / I thought
5 she was doing / she asked him / on how / to keep her posted
6 paid / the office cleaner to / the newspaper reporter / spill the beans
7 the issue of / find common ground on / they managed to / rates of pay
8 going away / the family agreed that / would bring him out of his shell / to university

Exercise 4

Make sentences 1–6 less formal. Replace the underlined words with the correct idioms A–F.

1 I haven't heard any news yet, but I'll inform you.
2 It was meant to be a surprise, but someone gave the secret away.
3 I heard a rumour that Penny and Alan are getting married.
4 It must be true. I heard it from a reliable source.
5 Let's meet up next week just to make contact again.
6 They support different teams but they agreed with each other when someone mentioned the off-side rule.

A let the cat out of the bag
B heard on the grapevine
C keep you posted
D found common ground
E heard it straight from the horse's mouth
F touch base

LIVEWORKSHEETS

IDIOM
UNIT 3

Exercise 5

Match idioms 1–6 with situations A–F.

1 Jo and Dee learnt that Bud was being fired when Baz told them what he'd heard from Amit.	A We got our wires crossed.
2 First the professor was talking about dinosaurs, then somehow it was the price of oranges!	B I got it from the horse's mouth.
3 This diamond was found by a workman on a building site. He told me about it himself.	C She let the cat out of the bag.
4 I think we should tell Lee that the time of the meeting has been changed.	D They heard it on the grapevine.
5 I thought we were going to the cinema and he thought I was cooking him dinner!	E Let's put him in the picture.
6 Nobody knew about the baby until Suzi mentioned maternity leave.	F He went off at a tangent.

Exercise 6

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

keep someone in the picture | go off at/on a tangent | hear something on the grapevine
keep someone posted | let the cat out of the bag | get your wires crossed | in the loop
touch base | from the horse's mouth | at cross purposes | spill the beans | in black and white

communicating badly	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
maintaining communication	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
revealing a secret	1 _____ 2 _____
trusting information	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Your turn!

Think about the way you've communicated with people around you recently. Use the idioms from this unit to describe a situation from the last few days. For example:

My teacher went off on a tangent and started telling us about her holiday.

I heard on the grapevine that Petra's getting married.



Sometimes, even your friends let the cat out of the bag.

LIVEWORKSHEETS