IDIOM
UNIT 10

Exercise 1

Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

clean | board | level | belt | bush | table | means | nose

1 He's a good man who works hard and keeps his _____ clean.
2 I've decided I'm going to get that contract by fair _____ or foul.
3 I can offer you something better than that, and all on the _____.
4 I'll lay my cards on the _____: we've run out of money.
5 We suspect their deal was not entirely above _____.
6 She decided to come _____ and tell them exactly what had happened.
7 We feel these financial cuts are below the _____.
8 He's always very direct and never beats about the _____.

Exercise 2

Decide if the following sentences are true (*T*) or false (*F*).

1 If you lay your cards on the table, you are telling the truth. ☐
2 If something is above board, it's dishonest. ☐
3 If someone is on the level, you can't trust that person. ☐
4 If you move the goalposts, you make things easier for people. ☐
5 If you call a spade a spade, you are being direct. ☐
6 If you beat around the bush, you tell the truth immediately. ☐
7 If someone wins by fair means or foul, they are careful not to cheat. ☐
8 If a remark is below the belt, it is possibly true, but nevertheless painful. ☐

Exercise 3

Match sentence halves 1–8 with A–H to make complete sentences.

1 I'll lay my cards on the table
2 I can never please my manager –
3 The other candidates have more money than me
4 He won't say it to my face
5 It was horribly disappointing
6 If you keep your nose clean
7 He felt betrayed,
8 We should be honest

A because he's scared of me.
B and call a spade a spade.
C he always seems to be shifting the goalposts.
D and tell them that I've done all I can do.
E but we were beaten fair and square.
F as though his son had stabbed him in the back.
G you'll progress quickly in this company.
H so it's not a level playing field.

Exercise 4

Correct the idioms in these sentences.

1 I can guarantee that these are genuine. I bought them square and square from an antique dealer.
2 Stop beating around the field and tell the truth.
3 I think that comment about her personal life was below the bush. You should apologise to her.
4 Everyone should start from the beginning. That way, we have a level playing card for everyone.
5 If you have something to say, just be honest and say it to my back.
6 When his boss gave him a bad reference after all his hard work, it was a real stab in the face.
7 The deal was all legal and above the table.
8 His ambition is to get the top job, by square means or foul.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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Exercise 5

Complete the sentences with idioms from this unit, changing the verb forms if necessary.

1 In all industries you need _____ to compete fairly with your competitors.
2 The world will never believe that he won that election _____.
3 Let's _____, we have to tell them exactly how we see it.
4 He needed to know to the truth, so she was going to go to his office and tell him _____.
5 If you _____ and tell us the truth, then it'll be a lot easier for you.
6 As soon as we reach a target, the management _____ and comes up with new demands.
7 'You'll be okay if you shut up and _____' he said.
8 She's determined to catch that criminal _____.

Exercise 6

Complete the table with idioms from this unit.

being direct	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
being fair and honest	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____
not being fair or honest	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Your turn!

Think about your life recently. Use the idioms in this unit to describe your experiences with other people – when someone has or hasn't been very honest or fair, or when you have or haven't been very direct. For example:

When Carlo told me our class was cancelled, I wasn't sure he was on the level.

I had to come clean and tell my boss that I was going to miss the deadline.



Jim didn't like the way the man was talking to him but decided not to say anything **to his face.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS