Vocabulary Ex. > Idioms from Geography



Read the text. Based on the context, guess the meaning of the idioms in bold.

Text taken from *Broukal, M. (1994) Idioms from Everyday Use. National Textbook Company. US.*

A Down-to-Earth-Town



Nothing much ever happens in our town. But, **once in a blue moon,** everyone gets excited about something. The town picnic in the middle of the summer is the big event of the year. People come to it from all over. But basically Bobtown is a quiet, sleepy old town. Some people say that it's **going downhill.** It is true that many citizens have moved away. There are empty houses, and real estate is **dirt cheap.** But the people who stayed have kept the spirit.

Yes, Bobtown is a simple place for simple people. People here are **down-to-earth.** They're not afraid to say what they think. They don't **make a mountain out of a molehill.** If a problem comes up, they solve it and don't waste time talking about how bad the situation is. Every election, the same mayor **wins by a landslide.** She gets all eighty votes.

Questions

1. If something happens *once in a blue moon*, **does it happen often? Name three activities you do** *once in a blue moon*.

2. If something is *dirt cheap*, **can any person afford it? What have you paid dirt cheap?**

3. If something *goes downhill*, **is it improving? Can you give an example of something that is going downhill?**

Exercise # 1

A. Each example has an idiom using a word from geography. Read the example carefully to find the meaning of the idiom. Then, match the definition with the corresponding idiom.

dirt cheap	When I run out of money, I usually go to garage sales. I can find good stuff **dirt cheap.**
down-to-earth	My parents gave us a **down-to-earth** view of marriage when Ley and I gave them the big news. All what was said made sense to me.
to go downhill	After his wife died, his health started **to go downhill**. It was a hard time.
to keep one's head above water	The business went well after the pandemic. Unlike other small companies, we could **keep our heads above water**.
to make a mountain out of a molehill	You are **making a mountain out of a molehill**. Having failed the first quiz of the term does not mean you won't pass the subject.



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once in a blue moon	Cesar is extremely careful about what he eats; so, it is only **once in the blue moon** he eats fast food.
out of the woods	The team is not **out of the woods** yet, but they have a last chance next Sunday if they can defeat the visitors in the game.
out of this world	In spite of the pitfalls, the inventions and release of Chat GPT in March 2023 was **out of this world**. The uses of AI in our lives have become to be unlimited.
over the hill	In my country if you are fifty or older, some people regard you as probably **over the hill**. That's why some people keep their jobs for long time.
over the moon	Emma was **over the moon** when I broke the news about my promotion. In fact, she opened a bottle of wine to celebrate.
slippery slope	The lack of education puts many young people on the **slippery slope** towards a life of crime. Government may prevent crime providing high-quality education.
to swim against the tide	Some of the greatest thinkers in history had **swum against the tide**. They have taught that a thinking differently is worth.
to take a rain check	I wanted Sandra to eat out, but she **took a rain check**. She felt sick last night.
the tip of the iceberg	The plastic waste that can be seen along the shore is just **the tip of the iceberg**. There are millions of tons of plastic in the ocean waiting to be extracted.
to be up the creek	If the police raid them, the ringleader would **be up the creek**. He can be sentenced to death or life imprisonment.
to win by a landslide	T. Roosevelt **won** his first presidential election **by a landslide**. The opposition was buried by a very large margin.
under the weather	Natalia was sufficiently **under the weather** that she had to pull out of the dance competition.
water under the bridge	Sergio was relieved since his time in jail was over and regarded it as **water under the bridge** .

IDIOM	DEFINITION
1.	**to exaggerate the importance of something trivial.**
2.	**extremely enjoyable, good, and impressive**
3.	**politely decline an offer, with the implication that one may take it up a later date**
4.	**a course of action likely to lead to something bad or disastrous.**
5.	**extremely economical; at low cost**
6.	**to gradually become worse.**

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7.	to act against the prevailing opinion or tendency.
8.	old and past one's prime
9.	to defeat in an election a person or political party by getting a lot more votes.
10.	extremely happy, ecstatic, delighted
11.	the small perceptible part of a much larger situation or problem that remains hidden.
12.	[usually with negative] out of danger or difficulty
13.	with no pretentions; practical and realistic
14.	to be in severe difficulty or trouble, especially with no means of extricating oneself from it.
15.	to stay out of trouble, especially financial difficulties; also, keep up with work and other demands.
16.	ill, slightly unwell or in low spirits
17.	very rarely
18.	something that is in the past, cannot be changed and should not be considered important.

Exercise # 2

A. Answer each question with YES / NO.

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. After the family party, the messy kitchen was *the tip of the iceberg*; the rest of the house was in a bigger mess. Was it a quiet party?		
2. Luxury shops rarely offer discounts. Can people find *dirt cheap* products?		
3. Ann complains about everything. Can she *make a mountain out of a molehill* easily?		
4. Clark *took a rain check* when he was invited to come along for the ride. Did he enjoy the ride?		

5. Jack will *be up the creek* **if the check is returned. Will he be in trouble?**		
6. The bank is in red numbers. They're not *out of the woods*, **are they?**		
7. Roger doubled the votes of his opponent. Did he *win by a landslide*?		
8. Once the new economic policies were applied, most of the local businesses have begun *going downhill*. **Are they making profits?**		
9. My grandma has been feeling a bit blue because my cousins come around *once in a blue moon*. **Do they visit her monthly?**		

Exercise # 3

A. Read the sentences below carefully. Write the idiom that corresponds to each situation best. Conjugate the verbs when necessary.

1. Lawrence works more than 50 hours a week to _____. He will be drowning in debt if he does not cut back on extras.

2. Steve Jobs' idea of creating a touch-screen phone was _____. It revolutionized technology and telecommunications industries.

3. Children are on a _____ once their parents justify any misbehavior as a normal act.

4. Few elected senators _____ to make things right. Unfortunately, the political machineries push them aside and they end up being overshadowed.

5. I got _____ when the Institute of Education at UCL accepted my application to start a master's in educational technology.

6. After the field trip some students were feeling a bit _____, so their parents decided not to send them to school for a couple of days.

7. If you say that someone is _____, it may be understood as they are no longer capable of doing useful work.

8. Naomi is an amazing actress. Unlike other showbiz stars, she is a _____ woman with no pretensions.

9. Maria and Johnny did not like each other when they studied in high school, but that's _____. Now, they are friends.

Level B1+

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