

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.

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

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

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

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