

Lena's Job Story – A2 Business Idioms

Reading Activity

Part 1: Read the Story

Lena worked in a small office. Her first job was a **dead-end job** – she answered phones all day. There was no chance to grow.

But Lena worked hard and started to **climb the corporate ladder**. After five years, she got a better job and was on the **fast track** to success. She was now **in the driver's seat** of a big team. Their product was a **cash cow** – it made a lot of money for the company. People said it was like a **golden goose** – very special and profitable.

One day, her company had a big problem – a **bump in the road**. A project was late because some people **cut corners** and didn't do a good job. Lena gave her boss a **ballpark figure** – a quick estimate of how much money they needed to fix it.

There was some **pushback** from her team. They didn't like the new ideas. There was also a lot of **red tape** – too many rules and documents. Still, Lena stayed strong and decided to **toe the line** and follow the company rules.

Then, a big change happened. The company merged with another one. Some people **jumped ship** and left the company. One of her coworkers felt he had **hit the ceiling** – he couldn't grow anymore. He left with a **buyout** and got a good **exit package**.

Lena stayed. The company wanted her to stay, so they gave her **golden handcuffs** – a big salary and bonuses to keep her. If she lost her job in the merger, she would get a **golden parachute** – a lot of money. Many others got a **severance package** or a small payout.

In the end, Lena did very well. She helped the company, and when she finally left after 10 years, she got a **golden handshake** – a thank-you bonus. It was a **soft landing** for her next job.

Part 2: Match the Idiom with the Meaning (Drag and Drop)

1. golden parachute
2. dead-end job
3. cash cow
4. climb the corporate ladder
5. ballpark figure
6. jump ship
7. red tape
8. golden handshake
9. fast track
10. severance package

A. A job with no promotion
B. Leave a company quickly
C. A quick number or guess
D. A product that makes lots of money
E. A big payment if you lose your job
F. A way to get promoted quickly
G. Hard or slow paperwork and rules
H. A goodbye gift of money
I. A way to move up in your career
J. Money you get when you lose your job

Part 3: Gap-Fill (Write the correct idiom)

1. Lena gave a _____ to her boss to explain the cost.
2. Their product became a _____ and made lots of money.
3. Some workers decided to _____ during the company merger.
4. She stayed on the _____ to promotion.
5. The company had too much _____ and it slowed work down.

Part 4: True or False? (Tick the correct answer)

1. Lena's first job gave her many chances to grow.
2. The company's product made no profit.
3. Lena left the company during the merger.
4. Her coworker left because he couldn't get promoted.
5. Lena got a thank-you bonus at the end.

Part 5: Multiple Choice (Choose the best answer)

1. What does "golden parachute" mean?
 - a) A project that fails
 - b) A big payment when someone loses their job
 - c) A type of promotion
2. What is a "cash cow"?
 - a) A product that makes a lot of money
 - b) An animal on a farm
 - c) A job with no future
3. What is "red tape"?
 - a) A company gift
 - b) Easy business
 - c) Too many rules and documents

Part 6: Open Questions

1. Have you ever had a dead-end job? What was it like?
2. Do you think golden handcuffs are a good idea? Why or why not?
3. Would you jump ship if your company had problems? Explain.