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Oxford **Word Skills**

# Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Advanced

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OXFORD

## 40 I can talk about honesty

### A Why do people tell lies?

- I was **scared to death** of telling the truth about my past; I knew people would disapprove.
- I decided to **keep** the truth **from** my mum to **spare her feelings**.
- I didn't **let on to** my friends that I'd lost my job; I didn't want to **lose face**, I guess.
- In retrospect, I realize that I just couldn't **face up to** the truth about my addiction: that's why I lied.
- I made a terrible decision at work, and then tried to **cover it up** and prevent the facts from **coming to light**. It was stupid of me.

#### Glossary

<b>scared to death</b>	INF very frightened. (Also <b>scare sb to death</b> make sb very frightened. SYN <b>scare the life/the living daylight out of sb</b> INF.)
<b>keep sth from sb</b>	avoid telling sb sth.
<b>spare sb's feelings</b>	be careful not to do or say anything that may upset sb.
<b>let on (to sb / about sth)</b>	INF talk about sth that is intended to be secret.
<b>lose face</b>	be regarded by others as stupid or wrong as a result of sth you have said or done. (If you <b>save face</b> , you avoid being regarded as stupid or wrong.)
<b>face up to sth</b>	accept and deal with sth that is difficult or unpleasant.
<b>come to light</b>	become known to people.

#### spotlight Hiding information

These phrasal verbs refer to action taken to hide the truth about something bad, illegal, embarrassing, etc.

Politicians tried to **cover up** the scandal. **cover-up** N.

The boy stole the chocolates but his parents **hushed it up**.

#### 1 Complete the sentences.

- I didn't tell her the truth because I wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ her feelings.
- People will be very angry if this information comes to \_\_\_\_\_.
- I knew they were getting married but I didn't let \_\_\_\_\_ to anyone.
- I didn't tell him what actually happened because I was scared to \_\_\_\_\_.
- It was a scandal in the village. They tried to \_\_\_\_\_ it up, but everyone knew.
- My grandfather was very ill, but the rest of the family \_\_\_\_\_ the truth from him.
- I think she lied because it was easier than \_\_\_\_\_ up to the truth.

#### 2 Use an idiom or phrasal verb to explain why the underlined people lied in these situations. Use a different idiom or phrasal verb in each answer.

- The boy was very ill, but his parents didn't tell him. *They wanted to keep it from him.*
- Ann had a bruise on her face, but her best friend told her it looked OK. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Mary knew her best friend was pregnant, but she kept it secret. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A young boy lost his strict father's expensive watch, but denied it. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Joe couldn't read or write, but he told people he'd forgotten his glasses. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Doctors said she wouldn't walk again, but she refused to believe it. \_\_\_\_\_

## B Who are more honest?

### Men or Women?

'My wife Marcia **goes red as a beetroot** whenever she tells a lie, and that **gives the game away**. She's worried that if she tells a lie, she'll **have it on her conscience**, and she can't **live with** that. But **when it comes to glossing over** the truth, she's pretty good at that!'



'When my husband Jeremy comes home late after a football match, he often tells me **a pack of lies** about why he's late. He thinks he can **pull the wool over my eyes**, but I **see through** him immediately (I know he's been to the pub). And if I dare to say, 'Oh, come on - **I wasn't born yesterday!**' he gets quite upset.'

### Glossary

<b>go (as) red as a beetroot</b>	have red cheeks because you are embarrassed.
<b>give the game away</b>	reveal sth that is intended to be a secret (often by accident).
<b>have sth on your conscience</b>	feel guilty because of sth you did or didn't do.
<b>live with sth</b>	accept sth unpleasant that you cannot change.
<b>when it comes to (doing) sth</b>	on the subject of sth.
<b>gloss over sth</b>	ignore sth or avoid saying sth, or treat it as unimportant.
<b>a pack of lies</b>	INF a story that is completely untrue.
<b>pull the wool over sb's eyes</b>	INF trick sb by giving them the wrong information.
<b>see through sb/sth</b>	realize that sb is not telling the truth, or that sth is not true; understand the truth about a situation.
<b>I wasn't born yesterday</b>	INF = I'm not stupid enough to believe what you say. SYN <b>pull the other one</b> INF.

#### 4 One word is either missing or wrong in these sentences. Add the missing word or correct the mistake.

- 1 He wouldn't lie because he'd have it in his conscience. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 When it comes helping others, my parents are fantastic. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 It was a ridiculous story – look, I wasn't yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Of course, as soon as she mentioned your name, she gave the game up. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 That girl told me packs of lies. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 He's always trying to pull the wool over my ears. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 His wife will never come back, and he finds that very difficult to live. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Unfortunately, when I made up the story, my aunt looked through it immediately. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5 Replace the words in italics with an idiom or phrasal verb that keeps the same meaning.

- 1 It's a horrible situation, but we'll just have to *accept it*. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Mark's story was *completely untrue*. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 If I don't tell them the truth, I'll *feel guilty*. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 When I mentioned Claude's name, Pam *looked very embarrassed*. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 It's not very sensible to *ignore or avoid* the facts. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 *On the subject of lying*, the headmaster takes it very seriously. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6 ABOUT YOU Do you think men are more honest than women? Do you think men are better liars? Write your answer in your notebook, or talk to another student.

## 41 I can talk about competition

### A Who will win 'Dancing Stars'?



Corinne and Jason **set the pace** from week one, and **forged ahead** of the rest. They **slipped up** a bit in their first dance last week, but they're still going to **take some beating**.

Pam and Mike are the **dark horses** in this competition. They've **been gaining ground** week by week, and I think they might **be keeping something up their sleeve**.

Alex and Sylvia are **neck and neck** with Pam and Mike. Now the competition **is hotting up**, the smallest thing could **tip the balance in** one couple's **favour**. It's impossible to say who'll **come out on top**.

#### Glossary

<b>set the pace</b>	establish a standard or rate that others have to try to achieve.
<b>forge ahead (with sth)</b>	make strong and steady progress with sth.
<b>slip up</b>	INF make a careless mistake. <b>slip-up</b> N.
<b>take some beating</b>	INF If sb <b>will take some beating</b> , it means they are very good and it will be hard for sb else to do better. SYN <b>be hard to beat</b> .
<b>gain ground (on sb)</b>	gradually get closer to people you are competing with. SYN <b>catch up (with sb)</b> .
<b>keep/have sth up your sleeve</b>	keep a plan or idea secret until you need it.
<b>hot up</b>	INF become more exciting or show an increase in activity.
<b>tip the balance (in sb's favour)</b>	give a slight advantage to sb.
<b>come out on top</b>	be more successful than the others.

#### spotlight Idioms from horse racing

A **dark horse** was a racehorse that nobody knew anything about. Now it refers to a person who other people know very little about, especially one who might achieve something that you don't expect. Two horses that are **neck and neck** in a race are level with each other. Now we also use it about two people or two teams in a race or competition.

#### 1 Are the meanings similar or different? Write S or D.

- |                                  |                                 |     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1 They're setting the pace.      | They're neck and neck.          | ___ |
| 2 They'll take some beating.     | They'll be hard to beat.        | ___ |
| 3 They're gaining ground.        | They're catching up.            | ___ |
| 4 The competition is hotting up. | The competition is slipping up. | ___ |
| 5 They're forging ahead.         | They're gaining ground.         | ___ |

#### 2 Rewrite the sentences using the correct form of the word in capitals. Keep the same meaning.

- They're making great progress. FORGE They're forging ahead.
- 1 They're level with each other. NECK \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 They're catching up. GROUND \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 It could give you a slight advantage. BALANCE \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 The race is getting more exciting. HOT \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5 She'll take some beating. HARD \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6 He could surprise us. HORSE \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7 She made a mistake. SLIP \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8 I think he has a secret plan he's holding back. SLEEVE \_\_\_\_\_

## B And the winner is....

I think the result was **in the balance** right up to that last dance, but we **gave it our all** and in the end it just **came down to** the judges' decision. The whole competition has been brilliant, and winning it is just **a dream come true**.



Well, we **gave it our best shot**, but it wasn't quite good enough. I thought we could **pull it off** with that last dance, but it wasn't to be. Maybe we **paid the price for playing it safe** – I don't know. Anyway, it was **a close thing**, and when I **look back on** the competition as a whole, I'm proud of what we've achieved.

### Glossary

**in the balance**

**give it your all**

**come down to sth/sb**

**a dream come true**

**give sth your best shot**

**pull sth off**

**pay the price for (doing) sth**

**play (it) safe**

**look back (on sth)**

If the result of sth is **in the balance**, it is uncertain.  
make the maximum possible effort.

If a situation **comes down to sth**, that thing is the most important factor.

INF sth that happens which you have wanted for a long time.

INF try as hard as you possibly can in doing sth.

INF succeed in doing sth that is difficult.

suffer as a result of bad luck, a mistake, or sth you have done.

not take any big risks.

think about a past event.

**spotlight** *a close thing/shave/call*

**A close thing** is a situation in which success or failure is equally possible.

**A close shave/call** is when you just manage to avoid a dangerous situation or accident.

### 3 Complete the last word in each dialogue.

- 1 You did everything you could. ~ Yes, I gave it my best \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 You didn't take too many risks? ~ No, we decided to play it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 How much do you want to win? ~ It would be a dream come \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 You nearly had an accident then. ~ Yes, it was a close \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Are you confident about the result? ~ Yes, I still think we can pull it \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Could either of them win? ~ Yes, I think it's still in the \_\_\_\_\_.

### 4 Complete the text.

I remember when Federer played Nadal at Wimbledon. They (1) \_\_\_\_\_ it their all for over three hours of brilliant tennis and it all came (2) \_\_\_\_\_ to the final fifth set. In the end Nadal (3) \_\_\_\_\_ off an incredible victory, but (4) \_\_\_\_\_ back on it, I think Federer will feel he paid the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ for only succeeding with one of the thirteen break points that he had. For Nadal, it was his first Wimbledon title, and a (6) \_\_\_\_\_ come true.

### 5 ABOUT YOU Have the sentences been true for you in a competition, or for a team you support? Write your answers, or talk to another student.

Winning it was a dream come true. *Winning the championship was a dream come true. I'd been practising for months.*

I gave it my best shot but it wasn't quite good enough. \_\_\_\_\_

I was amazed I pulled it off. \_\_\_\_\_

Looking back on it, I paid the price for ... \_\_\_\_\_

## 42 I can talk about humour

### A Funny or not funny?



#### Glossary

**pull sb's leg**

**a practical joke**

**tongue in cheek**

**laugh your head off**

**have a good laugh (about sth)**

**fall flat**

**be/get/go beyond a joke**

**no laughing matter**

INF tell sb sth which is not true, as a joke. SYN **have sb on** INF.

a trick which is intended to surprise sb or make them look silly, often involving physical actions (you **play a practical joke on sb**).

If you say sth (with) **tongue in cheek** or **with your tongue in your cheek**, you are not being serious and mean it as a joke.

INF laugh loudly and for a long time. SYN **be in stitches** INF.

find sth very funny and amusing.

If a joke **falls flat**, no one laughs at it.

If a situation **has got beyond a joke**, it has become annoying or worrying. sth which is too serious to make jokes about.

#### 1 Answer the questions with 'yes' or 'no'.

- 1 If someone is pulling your leg, should you believe them? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 If something is beyond a joke, is it very funny? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 If someone puts a frog in your bed, is that a practical joke? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 If someone says something tongue in cheek, are they being serious? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 If someone is having you on, are they telling you something which is true? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 If you are in stitches, are you laughing? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Rewrite the sentences on the left starting with the words given. Keep the meaning the same.

- |                                     |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 They all found it very amusing.   | They all had a good _____.      |
| 2 You're having me on.              | You're pulling _____.           |
| 3 No one laughed at her jokes.      | Her jokes fell _____.           |
| 4 She was saying it as a joke.      | She was saying it tongue _____. |
| 5 It's no longer a laughing matter. | It's gone _____.                |
| 6 He laughed his head off.          | He was in _____.                |

#### 3 ABOUT YOU Write answers to the questions in your notebook, or talk to another student.

- 1 Do you ever play practical jokes on people? If so, what kind?
- 2 Do you often have people on? If so, what about?
- 3 Do you often say things tongue in cheek? If so, who to?
- 4 Do you ever tell jokes that fall flat? Can you remember any?
- 5 When was the last time you had a good laugh?

## B Humorous idioms

Idioms are quite often used for ironic or humorous effect.

Idiom and example	Meaning
Where did he get those CDs? ~ I think they <b>fell off the back of a lorry</b> .	If you say sth <b>has fallen off the back of a lorry</b> , you mean it is probably stolen.
I can jump over that gate. ~ <b>Famous last words</b> .	<b>famous last words</b> SAYING used when you think sb is being too confident about sth that is going to happen or that they are going to do.
Is he always that silly? ~ Yes. I'm afraid <b>the lights are on but no one's home</b> .	<b>the lights are on but no one's / nobody's home</b> used to say that sb is stupid.
When was the last time he had a bath? ~ <b>I dread to think</b> .	<b>I dread to think</b> = I'm afraid to think about that question as the answer might be too terrible or unpleasant.
<b>For reasons best known to himself</b> , my father's bought a house next door to a zoo.	<b>for reasons best known to himself/herself</b> etc. used to say that you don't know or understand why sb has done sth.
I'm off to bed. I need my <b>beauty sleep</b> .	<b>beauty sleep</b> sleep that you need in order to feel healthy and look attractive.
Did Dr Fellows explain what to do? ~ Yes. But it was <b>as clear as mud</b> .	(as) <b>clear as mud</b> = very hard to understand.
Matthew said he would help us. ~ Oh dear. That's <b>the kiss of death</b> , then.	<b>the kiss of death</b> an action or situation that will bring bad luck or spoil an activity.
Where's Alfie? ~ <b>A call of nature</b> , I think.	(a/the) <b>call of nature</b> a need to go to the toilet.
My sister thinks she can paint the whole house in a weekend. ~ Goodness. <b>What planet is she on?</b>	<b>What planet is he/she on?</b> used to say that sb's ideas are not realistic or practical (also <b>sb is (living) on another planet</b> ).

### 4 Correct the mistake in each sentence, and write the correct word at the end.

- I can do it. ~ Yeah, famous lost words. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did you get that? ~ It fell off the back of a train. \_\_\_\_\_
- He's a bit stupid, isn't he? ~ Yeah, the lights are on but no one's here. \_\_\_\_\_
- I need to get my beautiful sleep. See you in the morning. \_\_\_\_\_
- Marty doesn't think we'll have to pay for drinks. ~ Gosh. What plane is he on? \_\_\_\_\_
- That explanation was as clean as mud. \_\_\_\_\_
- Marcel walked home in bare feet – for reasons better known to himself. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where's your mum? ~ A cry of nature, I think. \_\_\_\_\_

### 5 Respond to the first speaker. Include a suitable idiom in your answer.

- He's taking ages to fill in that form. ~ *Yeah, the lights are on but no one's home.*
- His flat's always dirty. How often does he clean it? ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - I didn't understand a word of that explanation, did you? ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Why do you always go to bed so early? ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - My brother is bringing boring old Malcolm to my party. ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Why are those radios so cheap? ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - The boss told me he thinks we all like working late. ~ \_\_\_\_\_ ?
  - He thinks he can beat all the girls easily. ~ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Where has Cathy gone? ~ \_\_\_\_\_

## 43 I can express criticism

### A Online complaints blog



#### I hate Cheap Air!

ANTON ► I'm **sick to death of** being treated like a second class citizen. At check-in, they managed to **squeeze** a cool €130 **out of** me just to board the plane – it was **daylight robbery**. And frankly, the attitude of the staff **is beyond me**, but I reckon they're badly treated so they just **take it out on** the passengers.

JEZEBEL ► It said in the paper they're going to start charging for hand luggage!! If that isn't **a rip-off**, I don't know what is ... but **I wouldn't put it past** them!

RUDY ► All those adverts of smiling passengers – why do we all **fall for** it every time? Listen, people, if you're so fed up with them, why don't you **vote with your feet**?

#### Glossary

##### sick to death of sth/sb

INF very annoyed or unhappy about sth that has lasted a long time. SYN **sick to the back teeth of sth/sb**.

##### squeeze sth out of sb

get sth by putting pressure on sb.

##### daylight robbery

INF used to say you think sth is much too expensive.

##### be beyond sb

INF be impossible for sb to understand or imagine.

##### take sth out on sb

be unpleasant to sb or punish them for sth that is not their fault, often because you are angry or upset.

##### a rip-off

INF If sth is **a rip-off**, it is more expensive than it should be. **rip sb off** v.

##### I wouldn't put it past sb (to do sth)

INF used to say you wouldn't be surprised if sb did sth bad or unusual because it would be typical of them.

##### fall for sth

be tricked into believing sth that is not true. SYN **be taken in by sth/sb**.

##### vote with your feet

show that you do not support or agree with sth/sb by not going somewhere or by walking away.

#### 1 Circle the correct answer(s). Both answers may be correct.

- The plane ticket's gone up by 3 per cent – it's *daytime* | *daylight robbery*.
- Did you manage to *squeeze* | *squash* the truth out of Jake?
- The students voted with their *feet* | *legs* and abandoned the lecture hall.
- I'm just *sick to death* | *the back teeth* of working sixty hours a week.
- Jenny may not invite either of us – I wouldn't put it *beyond* | *past* her.
- Did you really believe I would fall to | *for* that old trick?

#### 2 Complete the dialogues.

- They refused to come to the meeting. ~ That's right, they *voted with their feet* \_\_\_\_\_.
- I know she's capable of stealing. ~ Yeah, I wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_.
  - It was a ridiculous price to charge. ~ I know, it was a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - How can they charge so much? ~ I know, it's daylight \_\_\_\_\_.
  - It's shocking that she lied about it. ~ Yeah, it's \_\_\_\_\_ why she would do that.
  - I'm amazed that he fooled you. ~ I know, I can't believe that I \_\_\_\_\_ it.
  - You must be tired of all the travelling. ~ Too right; I'm sick \_\_\_\_\_.
  - So they made you pay another €20. ~ Yeah, they \_\_\_\_\_ me.
  - He shouted at me but I'd done nothing wrong. ~ Yeah, he was fed up and took it \_\_\_\_\_ you.

#### 3 ABOUT YOU Have you ever had any problems with bad companies? Write your answers in your notebook, or talk to another student.



## B Is criticism acceptable?

SONIA So how did the interview go, David?

DAVID Well, **no disrespect to** the interviewers, but I found them quite aggressive **to put it mildly**.

SONIA **To be fair**, that's their job, isn't it? You say what you think, and they **pull it to pieces**. That's what interviews are like – you shouldn't **take it personally**.

DAVID OK, that's **fair enough**, but I didn't expect the chairman to **jump down** my **throat** every time I opened my mouth. The thing is, I'm **all for** healthy discussion, but he just seemed to **have a bee in his bonnet** about expenses claims.

SONIA Well, it probably isn't very wise to **argue the toss** with any interviewer, **let alone** the company chairman. Better luck with your next interview!

### Glossary

<b>no disrespect (to sb)</b>	used when you are going to criticize sb and do not want to seem rude or offend them.
<b>to put it mildly / and that's putting it mildly</b>	used to say that you could have used much stronger words to describe sth.
<b>to be fair</b>	used when you are defending yourself or sb/sth against criticism. SYN <b>let's be fair</b> .
<b>pull/tear sb/sth to pieces</b>	INF criticize sb or their ideas very severely. SYN <b>pull/tear sb/sth to shreds</b> .
<b>take sth personally</b>	let yourself get upset about sth that sb has said or done.
<b>fair enough</b>	INF used to say that something seems reasonable, but you do not agree with it completely.
<b>jump down sb's throat</b>	INF react very angrily to sb in an unfair way.
<b>be all for sth / for doing sth</b>	believe strongly that sth should be done. OPP <b>be dead set against sth</b> .
<b>have a bee in your bonnet</b>	INF think or talk about sth all the time and think that it is very important.
<b>argue the toss</b>	INF continue to argue against a decision, especially when it is too late to change it or it is not very important.
<b>let alone</b>	used to say that sth is even less suitable or possible than another unsuitable or unlikely thing.

#### 4 Cross out one word in each sentence which is not necessary.

- There isn't enough food for the four of us, let us alone the rest of the class.
- If you want to leave school, be fair enough, but don't expect any help from me.
- She didn't mean to upset you; don't take it out personally.
- I'm all in for people contributing ideas, but we've got to make a decision very soon.
- Mum is all dead set against us moving to the country, and I can understand why.
- I only said I thought he could do better, but he jumped in down my throat!

#### 5 One word is missing in each line of text. Where does it go? Write it at the end.

My dad has a  $\chi$  in his bonnet about me and my studies. I want to become  $\blacktriangleright$  bee  
 a musician, but he's set against that. We had a row about it last night – 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 it was my fault, I should know better than to argue the with him late at 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 night. The thing is, disrespect to Dad, but I feel that I should give it a go, 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 and be fair, it is my life! I gave him a couple of reasons why I should 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 leave college, and of course he completely pulled my arguments to, 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 and that's it mildly! He wants me to study law, just as he did, but it 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
 really doesn't interest me, and I think he takes that. And if I don't make it 7 \_\_\_\_\_  
 as a musician, I still won't get a job in the City, alone become a lawyer. 8 \_\_\_\_\_

# Review: Human behaviour

## Unit 40

### 1 The same word is missing in each pair of sentences. Write it in.

- 1 a The information was hushed \_\_\_\_\_ to protect the doctor.  
b She tried to cover it \_\_\_\_\_, but we found out.
- 2 a You nearly scared me \_\_\_\_\_ death!  
b It's hard to face up \_\_\_\_\_ the truth.
- 3 a It was clearly untrue about the money, but I didn't let \_\_\_\_\_ that I knew.  
b I told a lie, but I don't want to have that \_\_\_\_\_ my conscience.
- 4 a She couldn't gloss \_\_\_\_\_ the truth any longer.  
b You can't pull the wool \_\_\_\_\_ my eyes!
- 5 a The government announcement was an attempt to save \_\_\_\_\_.  
b Neither side is prepared to lose \_\_\_\_\_ in the dispute.
- 6 a When it \_\_\_\_\_ to looking after children, she's brilliant.  
b We'll have to hope this information never \_\_\_\_\_ to light.

### 2 Complete the dialogues.

- 1 Why didn't you tell her the truth? ~ It was wrong not to, but I wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ her feelings.
- 2 Did he know his father was in prison? ~ No, his mother \_\_\_\_\_ it from him for years.
- 3 It's always difficult to give bad news. ~ Yes, it's tempting just to \_\_\_\_\_ over the truth.
- 4 Don't mention the surprise party to Alice. ~ No, we mustn't give the \_\_\_\_\_ away.
- 5 Why did she scream? ~ Well, you scared the living \_\_\_\_\_ out of her!
- 6 Do you feel responsible for the job losses? ~ Of course I do; it's very hard to \_\_\_\_\_ with.

## Unit 41

### 1 Complete the definitions.

- 1 If something is *a close shave*, you manage to \_\_\_\_\_ a dangerous situation.
- 2 If you *slip up*, you make a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 If you are *forging ahead*, you are making \_\_\_\_\_ quickly.
- 4 If you *play it safe*, you don't take \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 If you *pull something off*, you \_\_\_\_\_ in doing something \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 If something *tips the balance in your favour*, it gives you a slight \_\_\_\_\_ over somebody.
- 7 If the result is *in the balance*, it is not yet \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 If you *look back on something*, you think about a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9 If you are *neck and neck* with someone, you are \_\_\_\_\_ with them.
- 10 If you are *gaining ground on someone*, you are \_\_\_\_\_ with them.
- 11 If you *give something your all*, you \_\_\_\_\_ as much as possible.
- 12 If a game or race starts *hotting up*, it becomes more \_\_\_\_\_.

## Unit 42

1 Find answers to the clues by moving horizontally or vertically, backwards or forwards.

THE	A	NATURE	LAST ←	FAMOUS
KISS	CALL	OF	↓ WORDS	THINK
OF	DEATH	I	DREAD	TO
TONGUE	IN	CHEEK	LAUGH	YOUR
PULL	FALLS	FLAT	MUD	HEAD
SOMEONE'S	LEG	CLEAR	AS	OFF

► Used for saying you think someone is too confident about something. = *famous last words*.

- Very hard to understand. = \_\_\_\_\_
- A need to use the toilet. = \_\_\_\_\_
- Tell someone something that isn't true as a joke. = \_\_\_\_\_
- Saying something in a way that is intended to be a joke. = \_\_\_\_\_
- Laugh loudly and for a long time. = \_\_\_\_\_
- If a joke does this, no one laughs at it. = \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that will bring bad luck or spoil an activity. = \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't want to think about that question, because the answer might be horrible. = \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 43

1 Complete the dialogue.

- A I've heard the council is thinking of stopping people parking near the station.  
 B Well, I wouldn't (1) \_\_\_\_\_ it past them, given what they've done to parking charges.  
 A Why, what's happened to them?  
 B It's not just 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. You have to pay in the evenings now as well.  
 A But that's a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ -off!  
 B Well, I think it's probably (3) \_\_\_\_\_ enough to make motorists pay a bit more, and I'm (4) \_\_\_\_\_ for reducing the number of cars coming into town.  
 A But there aren't that many cars coming into town in the evening. It just seems as though they want to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ it out on motorists.  
 B Well that's because they're an easy target. People prefer to use their cars, so the council thinks it can always (6) \_\_\_\_\_ more money out of them.  
 A Well, I think it's daylight (7) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 B You can argue the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ for as long as you like, but it won't change things.

## Unit 44

1 Complete this website advice page for young people travelling abroad.

### HAVE A GREAT TRIP!

**FOOD:** Don't get paranoid about food poisoning or you will (1) \_\_\_\_\_ out on some great food experiences. However, it (2) \_\_\_\_\_ sense to drink bottled water at all times, and in some places, it does no (3) \_\_\_\_\_ to remember the old adage, 'boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it'.

**CRIME:** As a tourist you may be a target for pickpockets, so be alert and keep your (4) \_\_\_\_\_ about you. Keep your valuables in a money belt – you'll (5) \_\_\_\_\_ a better chance of not being robbed.

**TRANSPORT:** For what it's (6) \_\_\_\_\_, I don't think overnight buses are a great idea. You generally sleep badly and feel awful the next day. For overnight travel, your best (7) \_\_\_\_\_ is to travel by train.

**REMEMBER:** In the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of anything unpleasant happening – and if all else (9) \_\_\_\_\_ – you can always consult your embassy and consulate 24-7.



## Unit 47

### 1 Complete the texts. You will find one of the words for each idiom or phrasal verb in the box.

rush step minds rightly courage draw turn sight straw put ✓ weigh toss

#### Some decisions I've had to make in the last year:

- I couldn't **put** **up** **with** the flat I was living in any longer – it was really horrible, but I had to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ whether a move would be wise, given that I might be changing my job at the same time. I was in (2) \_\_\_\_\_ about whether to start looking around when, one day, the flat was broken into and my laptop was stolen. That was the (3) \_\_\_\_\_, so that same day, I went and found a new place to rent.
- There was this problem with my job, as I said. I'd been working all hours of the day and night, admittedly for a lot of money, but I'd completely (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of the important things in life: family, friends, personal happiness. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ wrongly, I (6) \_\_\_\_\_ a decision and got a job providing support for elderly people in their homes. I'd always wanted to do something for the community, and you have to have the (7) \_\_\_\_\_. I don't regret it at all.
- In the summer, my brother was in trouble over some small debts, and eventually he (8) \_\_\_\_\_ me for help. I worried about it for days; it was a (9) \_\_\_\_\_ as to whether I should get Dad to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ and sort him out financially, but in the end, I lent him the money myself. Hopefully he'll be able to (11) \_\_\_\_\_ under his problems and keep better track of his finances in future.

## Unit 48

### 1 Read the definitions and complete the idioms and phrasal verbs.

- ▶ something that probably won't succeed, but is worth trying:  
1 make a problem easier to understand: a *long* \_\_\_\_\_ shot  
2 decide to do something, knowing that it might be the wrong thing to do: shed \_\_\_\_\_ on sth  
3 not take any risks at all: take a \_\_\_\_\_ on sth  
4 ask someone to do what they are threatening to do, because you believe they don't intend to do it: play it \_\_\_\_\_  
5 become involved in a tricky situation without intending to do so: call sb's \_\_\_\_\_  
6 do something very dangerous, especially something that might injure or kill you: get yourself \_\_\_\_\_ sth  
7 bet on a horse, race, etc.: risk your \_\_\_\_\_  
8 be caused by a particular person or thing: \_\_\_\_\_ money on sth  
be \_\_\_\_\_ to sb/sth

### 2 Write in the missing prepositions or adverbs.

- 1 My brother's a real risk-taker: he thrives \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous sports like hang-gliding.
- 2 Personally I'm a very cautious person, and I always err \_\_\_\_\_ the side \_\_\_\_\_ caution.
- 3 Parking is allowed here, but purely \_\_\_\_\_ the customer's own risk.
- 4 I'm sticking my neck \_\_\_\_\_ here, but I think Barton will win the next election.
- 5 Millions of people around the world will be \_\_\_\_\_ risk from extreme weather in the future.
- 6 My sister is not the kind of person to seek \_\_\_\_\_ adventure; on the contrary.
- 7 The conference aims to throw light \_\_\_\_\_ how to manage financial risk.
- 8 The advisory committee is made \_\_\_\_\_ of experts in risk management.

# Idioms – some interesting histories

How did English idioms come into use? Here we show the meanings behind some idioms, and how some of them developed.

## beat about the bush (Unit 35)

This phrase refers to a technique used for hunting. Some hunters in the forest beat the trees or bushes to scare the birds or animals, which were then shot by other hunters as they tried to escape. **Beating about the bush** was therefore a preparation for catching the birds or animals, but without actually achieving it. If people **beat about the bush**, they keep talking, but without getting to the main point.



## be in the doldrums (Unit 18)

**The doldrums** is a 19th-century expression meaning a state of inactivity or laziness. Sailors used it to refer to certain areas of the ocean near the Equator where lack of wind made it difficult to sail. A business that is **in the doldrums** is not doing well.

## drive a wedge between people (Unit 7)

A **wedge** is a piece of wood or metal with one thin end and one thick end; you use it to keep two things apart or to split wood. If you **drive a wedge between** two people, you make them start disliking or feeling suspicious of each other.



## in a rut (Unit 57)

A **rut** is a deep track made by a wheel in muddy ground which it is then difficult to get the vehicle out of. If you are **in a rut**, you are living or working in a situation that never changes.



## quick/slow off the mark (Unit 30)

In athletics, the **mark** is the starting point in a race, or the line that indicates it, so someone who is **quick off the mark** makes a quick start. You can also describe someone as being **quick** or **slow off the mark** when they are quick or slow in responding to a situation.



## rest on your laurels (Unit 19)

Laurel leaves were used in Roman times to make a crown for the winner of a race or competition. If you **rest on your laurels**, you enjoy your success, but stop trying to improve your performance.



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