



Escucha & Aprende



Inglés

Vocabulary Master

300 Idioms



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Vocabulary Master

for Intermediate & Advanced Learners

300 Idioms

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PART 1. IDIOMS IN SITUATIONS

Lesson 1. BUSINESS AND MONEY

1.



1

Listen.

**A BUSINESS RUNS AT A PROFIT /
A BUSINESS RUNS AT A LOSS**

a business makes money / a business loses money
un negocio produce beneficios / pérdidas

The beginnings of our family shop were quite difficult and we ran at a loss, but as we are getting more and more customers now, we are beginning to run at a profit.

**FINANCES ARE IN GOOD SHAPE /
FINANCES ARE IN BAD SHAPE**

to have a lot of / not to have enough money
las finanzas están en buena forma / en mala forma

I'm afraid this company will go bankrupt as its finances are in very bad shape.

A FALLING MARKET

a market which is moving in a downward direction
mercado decreciente, mercado con tendencia a la baja

It is a falling market now with no perspectives and I wouldn't invest in it.

TO PUT MONEY INTO BUSINESS

to invest in a business
invertir dinero en un negocio

You will have to find another partner because I'm not going to put any more money into this business.

**TO CLOSE A DEAL / TO CLOSE
A BARGAIN**

to complete a deal successfully
cerrar un trato

After long negotiations we were finally ready to establish all the details and close the deal.

SHARP PRACTICES

behaviour which is dishonest but not illegal
métodos dudosos (pero no ilegales)

When it comes to business he doesn't have any scruples and uses illegal methods. He's known for his sharp practices.

A SLEEPING PARTNER	someone who invests money in a business but does not help to manage it <i>socio comanditario</i>
---------------------------	---

Jack invests some money in the family business but he's not actively involved in running it. He's just a sleeping partner.

A TAKEOVER	the change of ownership or control of a company <i>adquisición</i>
-------------------	---

Our little firm was too weak to survive on the market and so we couldn't avoid a takeover by a bigger company.

TO GO BANKRUPT / TO BE BANKRUPT	to admit that you have no money and cannot pay your debts <i>quebrar, estar en bancarrota</i>
--	--

Two years ago their little company went bankrupt as it wasn't able to pay its debts.

TO MAKE MONEY	to earn money <i>ganar dinero</i>
----------------------	--------------------------------------

He became a rich man after he made a lot of money in property speculation.

TO BE IN THE MONEY	suddenly have a lot of money <i>ser rico, tener mucho dinero</i>
---------------------------	---

When Peter found that old painting in his attic and it turned out to be very valuable, he knew he was in the money.

TO BE A WAGE EARNER / TO BE A SALARY EARNER	to have a job and be paid weekly / monthly <i>ser un asalariado</i>
--	--

In our family my husband is the only wage earner. We all wait for the money he brings at the end of the week.

TO MAKE A LIVING	to earn money <i>ganarse la vida</i>
-------------------------	---

Nobody knew how Sue made a living and it was quite a surprise when she said she worked as a writer.

TO BE WELL-OFF	to be rich <i>estar bien económicamente</i>
-----------------------	--

You have to be well-off to afford holidays in exotic places. Such luxuries cost a lot.

TO TIGHTEN ONE'S BELT	to spend less money in the time of financial difficulty <i>apretarse el cinturón</i>
------------------------------	---

Susan lost her job so she had to tighten her belt and cut down on unnecessary things.

2.



2

Listen and repeat.

Our shop ran at a loss at first but now it runs at a profit.

Our finances are in a very bad shape.

I wouldn't invest in a falling market.

I'm going to put some money into this business.

After long negotiations we closed the deal.

Our manager is known for his sharp practices.

Jack is just a sleeping partner in this company.

We couldn't avoid a takeover by a bigger company.

The company went bankrupt as it didn't pay off its debts.

He made a lot of money in property speculations.

Unexpectedly Peter was in the money.

In our family my husband is the only wage earner.

Susan made her living as a writer.

You have to be well-off to afford holidays in exotic places.

Susan tightened her belt and cut down on unnecessary things.

3.



3

Listen.

When Joe and Susan got married, they were very poor. Joe was the only **wage-earner** in the family and they had to think how they would **make a living**. They decided to start their own business but it wasn't easy to find someone who would like to **put money into it**. Thus they planned to **tighten the belt** and save some money to open a greengrocer's. Susan's father warned them that it was **a falling market** in their area as there were already four greengrocers in the neighbourhood but they wanted to take a chance. After some time, when their business started to **run at a profit**, Sue's father wanted to participate and he became **a sleeping partner**. Later, Joe's brother wanted to join them and they were just about to **close the deal**, when Sue found out that he was known for his **sharp practices** and the plan didn't work out. Sue and Joe were doing fine and they **made a lot of money** but after two years things got worse. There was a terrible drought in the country and the prices of vegetables and fruit rose drastically. They knew they were **going bankrupt**. **Their finances were in a really bad shape** and **a takeover** by a bigger company was just a matter of time.

4.



4

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- John was the only one who brought the money at the end of the week.
- ...
- *John was the only wage-earner.*
- They thought about how to earn money.
- ...
- *They thought about how to make a living.*
- They wanted someone to invest in the business.
- ...
- *They wanted someone to put money in the business.*
- They decided to spend less money.
- ...
- *They decided to tighten the belt.*
- A greengrocer's was a business with no perspectives.
- ...
- *A greengrocer's was a falling market.*
- The business started to bring money.
- ...
- *The business started to run at a profit.*
- Sue's father didn't join the business but he invested some money into it.
- ...
- *Sue's father became a sleeping partner.*
- They nearly completed the deal with Joe's brother.
- ...
- *They nearly closed the deal with him.*
- Joe's brother was known for dishonest actions.
- ...
- *He was known for his sharp practices.*
- Sue and Joe earned a lot of money.
- ...
- *Sue and Joe made a lot of money.*
- They had no money and couldn't pay the debts.
- ...
- *They went bankrupt.*
- They didn't have enough money.
- ...
- *Their finances were in a bad shape.*
- They couldn't avoid the change of ownership of the company.
- ...
- *They couldn't avoid a takeover.*

Lesson 2. WORK

1.



5

Listen.

TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS	to start doing something <i>ponerse a trabajar en serio</i>
--------------------------------	--

OK, the job has to be done very quickly so let's get down to business.

TO ROLL ONE'S SLEEVES UP	to start doing a job even though it's difficult <i>prepararse para trabajar</i>
---------------------------------	--

It's time to roll our sleeves up and clean this mess. It can't wait!

TO BE ON BUSINESS	to be for the purpose of doing business, not for pleasure <i>estar en el negocio</i>
--------------------------	---

Everybody thought George flew to Hawaii to relax but actually he went on business.

TO WORK IN THE FIELD	to work outside the office, laboratory or classroom <i>trabajar en el terreno</i>
-----------------------------	--

Joan spent years in libraries studying tribal languages so when she was asked to go to Africa and work in the field, she accepted the offer immediately.

A WHITE-COLLAR WORKER / A BLUE-COLLAR WORKER	a worker who does an office job / a manual worker <i>un empleado administrativo / un obrero</i>
---	--

A career of a white-collar worker in the office is much more popular among young people than the hard and dirty work of blue-collar workers.

TO BE ON DUTY / TO BE OFF DUTY	to be working / not working at a particular time <i>estar de servicio / estar fuera de servicio</i>
---------------------------------------	--

When we got to the hospital, the nurse on duty called for the doctor.

TO DO OVERTIME / TO WORK OVERTIME	to work after the usual hours for extra pay <i>trabajar horas extras</i>
--	---

Since Jane's divorce, she's been working a lot of overtime to earn some extra money. She stays at work much longer and is starting to feel very tired.

TO BE ON PIECE WORK	to receive payment for the number of things produced <i>trabajar a destajo</i>
----------------------------	---

We were on piece work and we were paid for the number of products we made so if you were fast you could earn a lot of money.

TO BE ON SHIFTS (TO BE ON THE NIGHT SHIFT / TO BE ON NIGHTS)	to start work as another group finishes <i>trabajar a turnos</i>
---	---

Our daughter wanted to become a nurse but the thought of working night shifts discouraged her.

TO BE ON CALL	be available at any time <i>estar localizable</i>
----------------------	--

Don't worry. There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day.

TO FIRE SOMEBODY	to dismiss somebody from employment <i>despedir a alguien</i>
-------------------------	--

I warn you! If you don't do the job by tomorrow, you will be fired and you'll have to start looking for another job.

TO GIVE SOMEBODY THE SACK / TO GET THE SACK	to dismiss somebody from employment / to be dismissed <i>despedir a alguien</i>
--	--

He got the sack when they found out he'd lied about his qualifications. Now he's unemployed again.

TO GO ON THE DOLE	to be unemployed and receive money from the government <i>ir al paro</i>
--------------------------	---

When Joe lost his job last December he went on the dole. Now he's still unemployed and he gets money from the government.

TO GO ON STRIKE	to stop working as a protest against something <i>estar en huelga</i>
------------------------	--

After the negotiations with the government had failed, the miners decided to go on strike. They stopped working and started their protest.

A BLACKLEG	a strikebreaker <i>esquirol</i>
-------------------	------------------------------------

As Smith continued to work when all his colleagues went on strike, he was considered a blackleg.

2.



6

Listen and repeat.

The job has to be done fast so let's get down to business.

It's time to roll our sleeves up and clean this mess.

George went to Hawaii on business.

Joan went to Africa to study tribal languages in the field.

A white-collar worker works in the office.

A blue-collar worker does a manual job.

The nurse on duty called the doctor.

Joan worked overtime to earn some extra money.

When we worked on the farm we were on piece work.

Nurses have to be on night shifts.

There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day.

If you don't do the job properly, you'll be fired.

He got the sack and now he's unemployed again.

Joe lost his job and went on the dole.

The miners decided to go on strike.

Smith didn't join the strike and was a blackleg.

3.



7

Listen.

For many years Meg was a **white collar worker** and spent her days in the office from nine to five. She used to **work overtime** as she wanted to save enough money to travel. She had already been **on business** to Germany and France but she dreamed of going somewhere exotic. In order to earn some extra money, she agreed to **be on call** even at weekends.

Last year her company was going through a difficult time and there were rumours that some people would have to **be fired**. Meg was a hard-working and loyal employee but when her colleagues decided to **go on strike** she didn't want to be a **blackleg** and joined the protest. Unfortunately, the firm **went bankrupt** and everybody **got the sack**. Meg didn't want to **go on the dole** so she started to look for a new job right away. For some time she worked in a supermarket but she didn't like being **on night shifts** and she quit. At that point Meg lost her hope that she would ever travel anywhere. However, after two weeks she came across an advertisement of some charity organisation which was looking for volunteers who would like to work in India. Meg didn't think much. She **got down to business** right away, **rolled her sleeves up** and wrote an application letter and a CV. After two months she was in India. She finally felt she was in the right place.

4.



8

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Meg did an office job.
- ...
Meg was a white-collar worker.
- She worked after the usual hours for extra pay.
- ...
She worked overtime.
- She went abroad for the purpose of doing business.
- ...
She went abroad on business.
- She agreed to be available at any time.
- ...
She agreed to be on call.
- Some people had to be dismissed from employment.
- ...
Some people had to be fired.
- Her colleagues decided to stop working as a protest.
- ...
Her colleagues decided to go on strike.
- She didn't want to be a strikebreaker.
- ...
She didn't want to be a blackleg.
- Everybody was dismissed from work.
- ...
Everybody got the sack.
- Meg didn't want to receive money from the government
- ...
Meg didn't want to go on the dole.
- She didn't like working at night.
- ...
She didn't like being on night shifts.
- She started doing something.
- ...
She got down to business.
- She was determined to do something and started writing a CV.
- ...
She rolled her sleeves up and started writing a CV.

Lesson 3. TIME

1.



9

Listen.

TO BE ON TIME	to be punctual <i>ser puntual / llegar a tiempo</i>
----------------------	--

The traffic on my way to work was so heavy that I worried if I would be on time.

TO BE BEHIND TIME	to be late <i>retrasarse</i>
--------------------------	---------------------------------

The train was delayed and it left twenty minutes behind time.

TO TAKE ONE'S TIME	not to hurry <i>tomarse su tiempo</i>
---------------------------	--

You don't need to hurry to leave so early. Take your time and relax before the journey.

TO DO STH AT THE LAST MINUTE	to do something at the latest possible time <i>hacer algo en el último momento</i>
-------------------------------------	---

They had a sudden change of plans and cancelled the trip to Egypt at the last minute.

TO DO STH ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT	to do something spontaneously, without hesitation <i>hacer algo impulsivamente, hacer algo de repente</i>
--	--

They didn't plan to get married in Las Vegas but they suddenly found the idea so fascinating that they did it on the spur of the moment.

TO BE UP-TO-DATE / TO BE OUT-OF-DATE	to include all the latest information / to be too old, not recent <i>estar a la última, ser moderno / estar anticuado, estar pasado de moda</i>
---	--

If you want to be up-to-date with the latest technology, you have to upgrade your computer quite often. Unfortunately, some street names in this town have been changed and this tourist guide is out-of-date.

IT'S HIGH TIME	something must be done without delay <i>ya es hora</i>
-----------------------	---

Tom is thirty years old and his parents think it's high time he moved out and started his own family. So he shouldn't wait any longer but get married fast.

TO HAVE A MINUTE	to be available to do something <i>tener un minuto (para alguien)</i>
-------------------------	--

Are you very busy after lunch or will you have a minute to talk to me?

AT ANY MOMENT	very soon <i>en cualquier momento / de un momento a otro</i>
----------------------	---

They are evacuating people in a hurry because the volcano is ready to erupt at any minute.

EVERY NOW AND THEN	occasionally, not very often <i>de vez en cuando</i>
---------------------------	---

Jennifer is too busy to visit her family quite often but every now and then she at least finds some time to have dinner with them.

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON	very seldom <i>muy de vez en cuando / raramente</i>
----------------------------	--

That theatre doesn't have a good reputation as it puts on an interesting performance only once in a blue moon.

ONCE IN A WHILE	sometimes <i>de vez en cuando</i>
------------------------	--------------------------------------

I'm not very keen on cooking and I don't do it often but once in a while I feel tempted to prepare something special for dinner.

A NIGHT-BIRD	a person who likes to stay up late at night <i>ave nocturna / un búho</i>
---------------------	--

Joe never goes to sleep before midnight. He's a real night bird.

AN EARLY BIRD	a person who gets up very early in the morning <i>un madrugador</i>
----------------------	--

My sister is an early bird so she's the one who walks the dog in the mornings.

TO KILL TIME	to do something in order to make time pass more quickly <i>matar el tiempo</i>
---------------------	---

On the train to Warsaw I read this magazine from cover to cover just to kill the time, and in fact the journey passed very quickly.

2.



10

Listen and repeat.

The traffic was so heavy that I couldn't be on time.

The train left twenty minutes behind time.

Take your time and relax before the journey.

They cancelled their trip to Egypt at the last minute.

They got married in Las Vegas on the spur of the moment.

I wanted to be up-to-date with the latest technology.

This tourist guide is out-of-date so we can't use it.

It's high time Tom moved out and started his own family.

Will you have a minute to talk to me after lunch?

The volcano is ready to erupt at any minute.

Every now and then Jennifer has dinner with her parents.

This theatre puts on a good performance only once in a blue moon.

I prepare something special for dinner once in a while.

Joe is a night-bird and he doesn't go to bed before midnight.

My sister is an early bird and she walks the dog in the mornings.

I read the magazine from cover to cover just to kill the time.

3.



11

Listen.

It was a Saturday night and Julie was sitting alone in her flat reading newspapers just to **kill the time**. She was a **night-bird** and she was used to spending evenings by herself. That day, however, she felt very lonely and knew she would **burst into tears** at any moment. Looking in the mirror she saw an almost thirty-year-old woman in **out-of-date** clothes and hairstyle. Julie wasn't a **party-goer**. She saw her parents **every now and then** and **once in a blue moon** she went out with Susan – her only friend. It was her birthday coming soon and Julie felt **it was high time** to change something in her daily routine. Yes, her life was boring. Every day she did the same things and performed the same duties always on time, like a robot.

Julie felt she had to do something. **On the spur of the moment**, without thinking, she called her boss and asked him if he would **have a minute** to talk to her. Mr. Brown was surprised but when Julie explained the situation and asked him for a week off, he agreed and told her to **take her time** and relax.

There was no time to lose now. Julie packed her clothes and decided to take the first plane to Paris. Luckily, when she came to the airport it turned out that the plane to Paris was **twenty minutes behind time** due to some technical problems and so she bought the ticket **at the last minute**. There she was, flying to a faraway country, all by herself, ready to meet the unknown.

4.



12

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Julie was reading the newspapers to make the time pass more quickly.
- ...
Julie was reading the newspapers to kill the time.
- She liked to stay up late at night.
- ...
She was a night bird.
- She knew she would burst into tears very soon.
- ...
She knew she would burst into tears at any moment.
- Julie was wearing old-fashioned clothes.
- ...
Julie was wearing out-of-date clothes.
- She saw her parents occasionally.
- ...
She saw her parents every now and then.
- She seldom went out with Susan.
- ...
She went out with Susan once in a blue moon.
- She had to change her life without delay.
- ...
It was high time to change something in her life.
- She performed all her duties punctually.
- ...
She performed all her duties on time.
- She called her boss spontaneously.
- ...
She called her boss on the spur of the moment.
- She asked her boss to spare her some time.
- ...
She asked her boss to have a minute for her.
- Mr Brown told her not to hurry.
- ...
Mr Brown told her to take her time.
- The plane to Paris was twenty five minutes late.
- ...
The plane to Paris was twenty five minutes behind time.
- Julie bought the ticket at the latest possible time.
- ...
Julie bought the ticket at the last minute.

Lesson 4. CONVERSATION

1.



13

Listen.

TO TALK AT CROSS PURPOSES	not to understand each other <i>hablar de cosas distintas, tener un diálogo de besugos</i>
----------------------------------	---

Let's stop arguing. The point is that we are talking at cross purposes and we just don't understand each other.

TO GET HOLD OF THE WRONG END OF THE STICK	to misunderstand the meaning or intention totally <i>malinterpretar algo</i>
--	---

People who think the author of this book wanted to offend someone get the wrong end of the stick. It is sometimes quite easy to misinterpret the author's intention.

TO GET A WORD IN EDGEWAYS	to be able to say something although the other person talks all the time <i>meter baza</i>
----------------------------------	---

Helen can talk all the time. Once she starts talking it's difficult to get a word in edgeways.

TO TALK BEHIND SOMEBODY'S BACK	to talk about somebody secretly <i>hablar a espaldas de alguien</i>
---------------------------------------	--

I don't want to talk about it behind his back. He must know what we think.

TO GIVE SOMEBODY A TALKING-TO	to talk to somebody angrily <i>regañar a alguien, darle a alguien una charla</i>
--------------------------------------	---

When Peter was late for work again, his boss gave him a long talking-to and decided to punish him severely the next time.

TO PUT IT IN A NUTSHELL	to state the main facts in a short, clear way <i>resumir algo, decir algo brevemente</i>
--------------------------------	---

These are our plans in a nutshell. We will go into details later.

TO BE LONG-WINDED	to talk for too long in a way that is too boring <i>ser interminable en explicaciones, ser prolijo en explicaciones</i>
--------------------------	--

Our headmaster's speeches tend to be rather long-winded. Everyone stops paying attention after a few minutes.

TO SPEAK ONE'S MIND	to be honest to people about your opinion <i>hablar con franqueza</i>
----------------------------	--

It's not easy to be honest about your opinions but Jerry always speaks his mind, even if it upsets people.

TO TALK RUBBISH	to say silly things <i>decir tonterías, decir disparates</i>
------------------------	---

Don't talk rubbish! It is very silly to spend all our money on the trip and remain without a penny for the rest of the holidays.

TO TALK SENSE	to say things that are reasonable <i>hablar con sensatez</i>
----------------------	---

John is the only person in this group who can talk sense on the subject. We can always rely on his reasonable opinions.

TO TAKE THE HINT	to understand what is meant, without it being said directly <i>darse por aludido</i>
-------------------------	---

I didn't have to tell him directly to go away and leave us alone. He took the hint and left immediately.

TO TAKE SOMETHING INTO ACCOUNT	to consider something when you are making a decision <i>tener algo en cuenta, tomar algo en consideración</i>
---------------------------------------	--

I hope they will take her qualifications into account when they consider her application for the position of managing director.

TO CUT A LONG STORY SHORT	to give the main points of something, not the details <i>abreviar, ser breve</i>
----------------------------------	---

I will save you the details. To cut a long story short, it took me two months to recover from the shock.

TO BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH	to avoid or delay talking about something unpleasant <i>andarse por las ramas, andarse con rodeos</i>
-------------------------------	--

OK, OK, ... stop beating about the bush and tell me who is responsible for all this mess.

TO HAVE A WORD WITH SOMEBODY	to talk to somebody quickly <i>tener cuatro palabras con alguien</i>
-------------------------------------	---

Could I have a word with you? I need your advice.

2.



14

Listen and repeat.

Parents and teenagers often talk at cross purposes.

I didn't mean to offend you. You got hold of the wrong end of the stick.

Once she starts talking, it's difficult to get a word in edgeways.

I think we should stop talking behind his back.

My boss gave me a long talking-to in front of all the staff members.

These are our plans in a nutshell.

Our headmaster's speeches are rather long-winded.

It's sometimes dangerous to speak one's mind.

Don't talk rubbish! I can't listen to it anymore.

Now you are talking sense!

He took the hint and left without a word.

I'm sure they will take her qualifications into account.

I won't go into details and I'll cut a long story short.

Stop beating about the bush and tell me what happened.

Could I have a word with you?

3.



15

Listen.

On 1st September all the students were gathered in front of the school waiting for the ceremony to start. Everybody knew that the head teacher's speech would be boring and **long-winded**. The students wouldn't mind if he **talked sense** but actually, he did **talk rubbish** quite often, and instead of **putting it in a nutshell**, he went on talking for ages.

In fact, everybody started to get impatient and **talked behind his back**. However, when one of the students stepped aside and **spoke his mind** quite loudly about how boring the whole ceremony was, Mrs Thomas, our form teacher, approached him quickly and asked angrily if she could **have a word with him**.

Paul's rude behaviour was too much for Mrs Thomas. When the ceremony ended, she **gave him a long talking-to** in front of the whole class. She didn't **beat about the bush** and accused him of offending the head teacher. Although he tried to explain that she must have **got hold of the wrong end of the stick** as he hadn't meant to offend anybody, they seemed to be **talking at cross purposes**.

To cut a long story short, Mrs Thomas didn't want to **take his explanation into account** and asked Paul to bring his parents to school the next day. No, it wasn't a happy beginning. Paul knew he was in trouble.

4.



16

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- The headmaster's speech was boring and too long.
- ...
The headmaster's speech was long-winded.
- The students knew he wouldn't talk reasonably.
- ...
The students knew he wouldn't talk sense.
- He often said silly things.
- ...
He often talked rubbish.
- The headmaster didn't consider the students' needs.
- ...
The headmaster didn't take the students' needs into account.
- He should have stated the main facts in a short and clear way.
- ...
He should have put it in a nutshell.
- Everybody started to talk about him secretly.
- ...
Everybody started to talk behind his back.
- Mrs Thomas wanted to talk to Paul quickly.
- ...
Mrs Thomas wanted to have a word with Paul.
- Paul was honest about his opinion.
- ...
Paul spoke his mind.
- He didn't avoid saying what he was thinking about.
- ...
He didn't beat about the bush.

- The form teacher talked to Paul angrily.
- ...
The form teacher gave Paul a long talking-to.

- The teacher misunderstood Paul's intentions.
- ...
The teacher got hold of the wrong end of the stick.

- They didn't understand each other.
- ...
They talked at cross purposes.

- The teacher didn't consider Paul's explanations.
- ...
The teacher didn't take his explanations into account.

Lesson 5. DISCUSSION

1.



17

Listen.

AN OPEN QUESTION	a matter for discussion <i>pregunta abierta</i>
-------------------------	--

They have agreed on most of the details concerning the wedding ceremony but the colour of the bride's dress is still an open question.

A STORM IN A TEACUP	a lot of excitement about a trivial matter <i>una tormenta en un vaso de agua</i>
----------------------------	--

The whole discussion about the bird flu in our country is only a storm in a teacup. There's probably no danger to public health at all.

TO CROSS SWORDS	to argue <i>vérselas con alguien</i>
------------------------	---

Susan and her mother-in-law argue a lot. They recently crossed swords on what to cook for dinner.

TO DROP THE SUBJECT	to stop talking about something <i>cambiar el tema</i>
----------------------------	---

I don't think we will find a compromise on this matter now so let's drop the subject. We will talk about it another time.

TO CHANGE ONE'S MIND	to change a decision or an opinion <i>cambiar de opinión</i>
-----------------------------	---

Judy was about to express her opinion but then she changed her mind and didn't say a word.

TO BEAR SOMETHING IN MIND	to remember something that could be useful in the future <i>tener algo en cuenta</i>
----------------------------------	---

When you speak to Becky, please bear in mind that she is very sensitive to criticism. Remember to be careful not to hurt her.

TO MAKE UP ONE'S MIND	to take a decision <i>tomar una decisión</i>
------------------------------	---

Susan has always taken decisions easily in life. She made up her mind to become a singer when she was only five years old.

TO TAKE SOMETHING FOR GRANTED	to believe that something is true without first thinking about it or making sure that it is true <i>dar algo por supuesto</i>
--------------------------------------	--

Judy and Sarah looked so alike that I was sure they were sisters. I just took it for granted and it was quite a shock to find out they were not.

TO COME TO THE POINT / TO GET TO THE POINT / TO REACH THE POINT	to reach the most important thing one has to say <i>ir al grano, ir al asunto</i>
--	--

Our manager enjoys speaking in public and it always takes him a long time to get to the point.

TO FAIL TO SEE THE POINT / TO MISS THE POINT	not to understand the purpose of something <i>no entender el asunto</i>
---	--

To tell you the truth, I wasn't listening carefully. I'm afraid I missed the point of your argument so please clarify your position briefly.

TO GET THE POINT / TO SEE THE POINT	to understand the purpose of something <i>entender el asunto</i>
--	---

To be honest, I can't see the point of your asking her for help. I don't understand why you insist on talking to her. She won't even listen to you.

TO MAKE ONE'S POINT	to explain clearly one's argument or an idea <i>hacerse entender</i>
----------------------------	---

OK, you've made your point. Now please listen to what I have to say.

TO HOLD ONE'S TONGUE	to stop talking <i>morderse la lengua</i>
-----------------------------	--

Although George felt deeply insulted, he held his tongue and said nothing.

TO HAVE THE LAST WORD	to produce a statement to which no one else can make a reply or objection <i>tener la última palabra</i>
------------------------------	---

It's no use arguing with my parents. They must always have the last word.

IN A WAY / IN SOME WAYS	in a sense, to a certain extent <i>en cierto modo, en cierta manera</i>
--------------------------------	--

It's sad but, in a way, you understand me better than my own parents. To a certain extent, I feel much more at home here with you than with my family.

ALL IN ALL	when everything is considered <i>en definitiva, en resumen</i>
-------------------	---

It's true we wasted some time quarrelling but, all in all, I think it was a very fruitful discussion.

FOR ONE THING	for one reason <i>en primer lugar</i>
----------------------	--

Well, there are so many reasons for his rude behaviour. For one thing, his parents have never paid any attention to it so don't be surprised.

TO BE OUT OF PLACE	to be inappropriate, awkward <i>estar fuera de lugar, ser inadecuado</i>
---------------------------	---

Your remark was absolutely out of place. It's inappropriate to be so straightforward when you meet someone for the first time.

TO BE OUT OF THE QUESTION	something is definitely not a possibility <i>imposible, de ningún modo</i>
----------------------------------	---

You will definitely not get more pocket money this year – it's out of the question!

TO WRAP UP THE DISCUSSION	to finish the discussion <i>finalizar el debate</i>
----------------------------------	--

As we were in a hurry to catch the last plane we were hoping to wrap up the discussion before lunchtime.

2.



18

Listen and repeat.

The colour of the dress is still an open question

This whole discussion was only a storm in a teacup.

Susan and her mother-in-law often cross swords.

Let's drop the subject. We'll talk about it later.

Judy wanted to say something but she changed her mind.

Please, bear in mind she is very sensitive.

Susan made up her mind to become a singer.

I took it for granted that they were twins.

It takes him a long time to get to the point.

I'm afraid I missed the point of your argument.

I can't see the point of asking her for help.

You've made your point and now let me make mine.

Adam held his tongue and said nothing.

They must always have the last word.

In a way, you know me better than my parents.

All in all, it was a very fruitful discussion.

For one thing, his parents didn't teach him anything.

Your remark was out of place.

You won't get it! It's out of the question!

We had to wrap up the discussion very quickly.

3.



19

Listen.

Politics is a very risky topic at social gatherings and family meetings. People often **take it for granted** that others share their views and sometimes a casual remark turns out to be absolutely **out of place**. Then, instead of a nice chat at the table people start to **cross swords**.

Those with opposite views try to make each other **change their minds**. They do all they can to **make their points** and **have the last word**. If the opponent fails to **see the point**, people start to shout at each other and the atmosphere of the meeting is spoiled.

Should we avoid discussing politics altogether then? Well, **for one thing**, there are plenty of much more interesting subjects. What's more, we should **bear in mind** that our misbehaviour may hurt others' feelings.

Sometimes when things get out of hand, and somebody tries to **wrap up the discussion**, we should **hold our tongues** and **drop the subject** immediately. **All in all**, although politics is an exciting issue, we should remember that sometimes it can be dangerous as well.

4.



20

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- People often assume things.
- ...
People often take things for granted.
- Your remark is inappropriate.
- ...
Your remark is out of place.

- People often start to quarrel.
- ...
People often start to cross swords.
- They try to persuade each other.
- ...
They try to make each other change their minds.
- Everybody wants to say what they consider important.
- ...
Everybody wants to make their points.
- All of them want to say something no one else would beat.
- ...
All of them want to have the last word.
- He doesn't understand me.
- ...
He fails to see my point.
- For one reason, there are more interesting subjects.
- ...
For one thing, there are more interesting subjects.
- This is something you should remember.
- ...
This is something you should bear in mind.
- Everybody has a right to finish the discussion.
- ...
Everybody has a right to wrap up the discussion.
- You should stop talking now.
- ...
You should hold your tongue.
- They must stop discussing this subject.
- ...
They must drop the subject.
- Summing up, politics is a tricky subject.
- ...
All in all, politics is a tricky subject.

Lesson 6. PROBLEMS

1.



21

Listen.

TO STIR THINGS UP	to deliberately try to have arguments <i>revolver las cosas</i>
--------------------------	--

Melanie is a real troublemaker. She stirs things up wherever she appears.

TO POUR OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS	to try to make an angry situation calmer <i>tranquilizar los ánimos, apaciguar los ánimos</i>
---------------------------------------	--

Sue was really mad at Steve so he tried to pour oil on troubled waters by offering to take her out for a meal.

TO LAY ONE'S CARDS ON THE TABLE	to tell somebody honestly what you think or plan to do <i>poner las cartas sobre la mesa</i>
--	---

Chris decided to lay his cards on the table and inform Betty he was in love with someone else.

TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS	to discover the truth about the situation <i>llegar al fondo del asunto</i>
---------------------------------------	--

It is difficult for the police to get to the bottom of this crime as there are no witnesses who could confirm what really happened.

TO GET A GRASP	to get the ability to understand something <i>entender algo</i>
-----------------------	--

Sue had few language skills before she left Poland. After she had spent a year in London, they really developed and she got a good grasp of English.

TO SEE A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL	to believe that a difficult situation will end <i>ver la luz al final del túnel</i>
--	--

Inflation is still rising but analysts say there is a light at the end of the tunnel and it will start falling before the end of the year.

TO SWEEP UNDER THE CARPET	to try to hide a problem instead of dealing with it <i>esconder el problema</i>
----------------------------------	--

When some people don't know how to deal with a problem they prefer to sweep it under the carpet and pretend not to bother about it.

TO BE IN A FIX	to be in a difficult situation <i>estar en un apuro, estar en un aprieto</i>
-----------------------	---

I'm in a real fix. The car doors are locked and the keys are inside.

TO BE AT A CROSSROADS	to be at a crisis, at a turning point in one's life <i>encontrarse en una encrucijada, estar ante una difícil situación</i>
------------------------------	--

When Julie divorced her husband, she found herself at a crossroads. She wasn't sure whether she should stay in Spain or go back to Britain.

TO FIND A HAPPY MEDIUM	to find a way that is not extreme but is somewhere between two possible choices <i>encontrar una solución intermedia</i>
-------------------------------	---

Nowadays it's very difficult for young women to find a happy medium between having a family and a career.

TO SKATE ON THIN ICE	to take a big risk <i>pisar en terreno peligroso</i>
-----------------------------	---

John's position at work was not very stable so he knew he was skating on thin ice when he asked his boss for a pay rise. He risked losing his job.

TO PUT ONESELF IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES	to be in the same situation as someone else <i>ponerse en la posición de alguien</i>
---	---

In order to understand what Joan is going through right now, you would have to put yourself in her shoes.

TO TAKE SOMETHING TO HEART	to think about something seriously <i>tomarse algo a pecho</i>
-----------------------------------	---

When Steve told us about the burglaries in this area, we took his warning to heart and installed an alarm system in our house.

TO KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE	to look serious and not laugh although you are in a funny situation <i>mostrarse impasible, quedarse como si nada</i>
--------------------------------	--

Although pupils in this class play jokes constantly, Mrs Smith manages to keep a straight face and remain serious no matter how hard they try to make her laugh.

TO BURN ONE'S FINGERS	to suffer unpleasant results of an action <i>quemarse los dedos</i>
------------------------------	--

I once invested some money on the stock market but I burned my fingers, lost almost all of it and decided never to try again.

TO BURN ONE'S BOATS / TO BURN ONE'S BRIDGES	to do something which cannot be reversed or changed later <i>tirar piedras sobre el propio tejado de uno</i>
--	---

After Jerry told his boss to go to hell, he knew he would be fired. He had burnt his boats and it was too late to reverse it.

TO GET INTO HOT WATER / TO GET INTO A MESS	to get into trouble / to get into a difficult situation <i>meterse en líos</i>
---	---

You get into trouble too often and you will get into hot water again when your teacher finds out you were cheating during the test.

TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS	not to ask questions or show interest in something <i>preocuparse de los propios asuntos de uno</i>
----------------------------------	--

I wish he'd mind his own business and stop telling me what I should do.

TO SEE DAYLIGHT	to understand something that you didn't understand before <i>ver la luz, empezar a ver la luz</i>
------------------------	--

I thought I would never understand how the computer works but after a few classes with Mr Black I saw daylight and realised it wasn't so difficult.

TO FACE THE MUSIC	to accept criticism or punishment for something that you've done <i>hacer frente a las consecuencias</i>
--------------------------	---

When they found out that Jane was the one who had taken the money, she had to face the music and couldn't avoid punishment that time.

2.



22

Listen and repeat.

Melanie likes to stir things up.

Steve tried to pour oil on troubled waters but it didn't help.

Chris decided to lay his cards on the table.

It's difficult to get to the bottom of this crime.

She got a good grasp of English when she was in London.

The analysts saw a light at the end of the tunnel.

People often sweep their problems under the carpet.

When I found the car doors locked, I was in a fix.

After her divorce, Julie was at a crossroads.

It was hard to find a happy medium in that situation.

John was skating on thin ice when he asked for a pay rise.

Put yourself in my shoes and you'll know what I feel.

He finally took my advice to heart.

He kept a straight face and didn't laugh.

I burnt my fingers once and will never try again.

He burnt his boats and there was no turning back.

We'll get into hot water when the teacher finds out.

Just mind your own business, OK?

After a few classes I saw daylight.

I'm afraid it's time to face the music.

3.



23

Listen.

John and Lucy had two children and when Lucy got pregnant again, they knew they were **in a fix**. They had had financial problems before but both of them preferred to **sweep them under the carpet** rather than **get to the bottom of things** and change anything. The atmosphere at home was really tense. Lucy tried to **pour oil on troubled waters** for the sake of the kids but finally they **got a grasp** of the fact that they were **at a crossroads**. When Lucy suggested that John should look for another job, he **took her advice to heart**. He tried hard but with no success. He spent days thinking what to do and then suddenly he **saw daylight**. Why couldn't he confront his boss for the first time and ask him for a pay rise? That could be a **happy medium**.

The next day John knocked at his boss's door. He knew he was **skating on thin ice** but there was no way back. In a calm voice, he **laid his cards on the table**. Realising he could **burn his bridges**, he said he would have to quit if he didn't get more money. When the manager asked for some time to think it over, John **saw a light at the end of the tunnel**. Later that day, when he finally got a promotion and a pay rise, he was really happy but he managed to **keep a straight face** in front of his colleagues.

4.



24

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- John and Lucy were in a difficult situation.
- ...
John and Lucy were in a fix.
- They preferred to hide their problems.
- ...
They preferred to sweep their problems under the carpet.
- They didn't want to discover the truth.
- ...
They didn't want to get to the bottom of things.
- Lucy tried to calm down the situation.
- ...
Lucy tried to pour oil on troubled waters.
- Finally they understood their problem.
- ...
Finally they got a grasp of their problem.
- They were at a crisis.
- ...
They were at a crossroads.
- John thought about Lucy's suggestion seriously.
- ...
John took Lucy's suggestion to heart.
- Suddenly, he understood what he couldn't see before.
- ...
Suddenly, he saw daylight.
- John found a perfect solution to his problem.
- ...
John found a happy medium.
- He was risking a lot.
- ...
He was skating on thin ice.
- John said honestly what he thought.
- ...
John laid his cards on the table.

- He could say something that couldn't be reversed.
- ...
He could burn his bridges.

- He started to believe that there was some hope.
- ...
He saw a light at the end of the tunnel.

- He managed to look serious.
- ...
He managed to keep a straight face.

Lesson 7. BEHAVIOUR

1.



25

Listen.

TO BE OUT OF ONE'S MIND	be mad, crazy <i>perder el juicio</i>
--------------------------------	--

Don't be crazy! You must be out of your mind if you want to climb Mount Everest on your own.

TO BE AS THICK AS THIEVES	of two people - very friendly <i>ser uña y carne</i>
----------------------------------	---

Jack and Jim are as thick as thieves. They've been friends for years and they can always count on each other.

TO BLOW ONE'S OWN TRUMPET	praise one's own successes <i>presumir, echarse flores</i>
----------------------------------	---

Oh, come on! Stop blowing your own trumpet. We know how successful you are and you don't need to talk about it all the time.

TO GO ONE'S OWN WAY	to act independently <i>seguir su propio camino</i>
----------------------------	--

We had been partners until Joe decided to go his own way and set up a new business.

TO BE A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP	to be awkward, tactless <i>ser como un elefante en una cacharrería</i>
-------------------------------------	---

Mary can be so tactless! She acted like a bull in a china shop when she criticised the way I looked at my own birthday party.

TO BE A SNAKE IN THE GRASS	to pretend to be a friend <i>ser un traicionero, ser un enemigo oculto</i>
-----------------------------------	---

It's very sad to discover that someone you once viewed as a friend turns out to be a snake in the grass.

TO DRIVE SOMEONE MAD	to irritate or anger somebody <i>volver loco a uno</i>
-----------------------------	---

My kids really drive me mad. It's so irritating that they keep forgetting their front-door keys.

TO LOSE ONE'S TEMPER	to become very angry <i>perder la calma</i>
-----------------------------	--

Mary is so patient with the twins. I've never seen her lose her temper.

TO LOSE ONE'S HEAD	to lose the ability to think clearly <i>perder la cabeza</i>
---------------------------	---

She can usually think clearly in stressful situations but this time she lost her head and stood there helplessly.

TO LOSE ONE'S TONGUE	to say nothing because of shyness <i>quedarse mudo</i>
-----------------------------	---

When Judy asked her husband where he had spent the previous night, he lost his tongue and couldn't say a word.

TO KEEP ONE'S CHIN UP	to stay brave and optimistic in a difficult situation <i>poner al mal tiempo buena cara</i>
------------------------------	--

We really admire Sue for keeping her chin up despite all the trouble she's going through right now.

TO PLAY THE FOOL	to behave in a silly way especially to make people laugh <i>hacerse el tonto</i>
-------------------------	---

Stop playing the fool! You will fall off that ladder!

TO SHOW ONE'S TEETH	to show anger or aggression <i>enseñar los dientes, enseñar las garras</i>
----------------------------	---

This time you have to express how angry you are – show your teeth!

TO GET ON SOMEONE'S NERVES	to irritate <i>poner a alguien de los nervios</i>
-----------------------------------	--

Joanna can be really irritating and if I was to spend more time with her, she would really get on my nerves.

TO HIT BELOW THE BELT	to act unfairly or cruelly <i>dar un golpe bajo</i>
------------------------------	--

He was really hitting below the belt when he said those nasty things about Judy.

2.



26

Listen and repeat.

You must be out of your mind!

Mark and Paul are as thick as thieves.

Oh, come on! Stop blowing your own trumpet.

They separated and Joe went his own way.

Mary acted like a bull in a china shop.

He turned out to be a snake in the grass.

My kids really drive me mad!

She never loses her temper.

Think clearly and don't lose your head!

He lost his tongue and couldn't say a word.

Don't lose your optimism and keep your chin up.

Calm down and stop playing the fool!

Gwen got really angry and showed her teeth.

You are getting on my nerves!

He hit me below the belt and hurt me deeply.

3.



27

Listen.

Paul and Steve have always been close friends. They were **as thick as thieves** and when they found themselves wives, their families started to share a big house. They lived in harmony until Steve's children were born. The kids started to **get on** Paul's **nerves** as the noise they made really **drove him mad**.

When one day Paul asked Steve to do something about it, he heard that he was tactless. Just **a bull in a china shop**. Next time, when the noise was unbearable, Paul really got angry and **showed his teeth**. Then he heard that he must be **out of his mind** and that he would understand the situation if he had his own kids. That was enough for Paul. He and his wife couldn't have children so with this remark Steve **hit below the belt**. Paul felt betrayed. He **lost his tongue** and realised his best friend had turned out to be **a snake in the grass**.

Although it made him sad, he managed to **keep his chin up**. Paul didn't **lose his temper** and calmly approached Steve, saying it was high time for them to **go their own ways**.

4.



28

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Paul and Steve were close friends.
- ...
Paul and Steve were as thick as thieves.
- The kids started to irritate Paul.
- ...
The kids started to get on Paul's nerves.
- The noise made him really angry.
- ...
The noise drove him mad.

- Paul was awkward and tactless.
- ...
Paul acted like a bull in a china shop.
- Paul finally showed his anger.
- ...
Paul showed his teeth.
- Paul heard he must be crazy
- ...
Paul heard he must be out of his mind.
- Steve's words were cruel.
- ...
Steve hit below the belt.
- Paul couldn't say a word.
- ...
Paul lost his tongue.
- Steve only pretended to be a friend.
- ...
Steve was a snake in the grass.
- Paul managed to stay optimistic.
- ...
Paul kept his chin up.
- Paul stayed calm.
- ...
Paul didn't lose his temper.
- It was time for them to separate.
- ...
It was time to go their own ways.

Lesson 8. FEELINGS

1.



29

Listen.

TO BE ON CLOUD NINE	to be very happy <i>estar en la nubes, estar muy feliz</i>
----------------------------	---

I was on cloud nine when I finally passed the last exam and could go on my holiday.

TO BE IN HIGH SPIRITS	to be excited and happy <i>estar muy animado</i>
------------------------------	---

The whole school was very excited when one of the pupils won the race but they were only really in high spirits when he was shown on TV.

TO BE IN SEVENTH HEAVEN	to be extremely happy <i>estar en el séptimo cielo, estar muy feliz</i>
--------------------------------	--

Paul was in seventh heaven when he found out he had won the lottery.

TO BE AT EASE	to feel relaxed <i>estar cómodo, estar relajado</i>
----------------------	--

Before taking an important exam, it's best to take some rest and relax in order to feel more at ease.

TO BE IN A BLACK MOOD	to be irritable, angry <i>estar de mal humor</i>
------------------------------	---

This rain puts me in a black mood. I really feel depressed.

TO HAVE SOMETHING ON ONE'S MIND	to think or worry about something <i>tener algo en la cabeza, preocuparse por algo</i>
--	---

I can see that something is worrying you. Tell me, what's on your mind?

TO BE ABLE TO EAT A HORSE	to be very hungry <i>ser capaz de comerse una vaca</i>
----------------------------------	---

After a long swim in the sea, he felt so hungry that he could eat a horse.

TO BE SHAKING IN ONE'S SHOES	to be very frightened or anxious <i>temblar de miedo</i>
-------------------------------------	---

I was shaking in my shoes when I heard a scream in the middle of the night. It was so terrifying that I hid under my bed.

TO JUMP OUT OF ONE'S SKIN	to be very surprised or shocked <i>morirse de miedo, llevarse un gran susto</i>
----------------------------------	--

I'm afraid of mice so when I saw this little creature running across my room, I almost jumped out of my skin.

TO BE LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER	to feel awkward because you are not familiar with the situation <i>estar como pez fuera del agua</i>
---------------------------------------	---

All the other guests arrived in casual clothes so she felt like a fish out of water in her fancy dress.

TO BE ON EDGE	to be very nervous or worried about something <i>tener los nervios de punta</i>
----------------------	--

The footballers were all on edge before the final match. The pressure was too big to handle.

TO BE ON TENTERHOOKS	to nervously wait to find out what's going to happen <i>estar en ascuas, estar con el alma en vilo</i>
-----------------------------	---

We were all on tenterhooks waiting for the exam results.

TO BE OVER THE MOON	to be extremely pleased <i>estar encantado de la vida</i>
----------------------------	--

Joe had been trying to find a job for six months so when he was offered the post of the vice president of the company, he was over the moon.

TO SEE RED	to become very angry <i>ponerse rojo de ira</i>
-------------------	--

When Matt accused me in front of my workmates, I just saw red. I got so furious that I grabbed him and pushed him against the wall.

TO BE FULL OF BEANS	to be very energetic <i>rebosar de vitalidad</i>
----------------------------	---

After a long nap the kids were so full of beans that I could hardly control them.

2.



30

Listen and repeat.

I was on cloud nine when I passed the exam.

After winning the race, the students were in high spirits.

He was in seventh heaven when he won the lottery.

At the end of the day I could finally feel at ease.

This rain puts me in a black mood.

He had other things on his mind.

I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.

I was shaking in my shoes when I heard the scream.

The noise made me almost jump out of my skin.

In her casual clothes she felt like a fish out of water.

We were on edge before the final match.

They were on tenterhooks waiting for the results.

I was over the moon when I finally found a job.

The teacher got furious and saw red.

The kids were full of beans as usual.

3.



31

Listen.

It was a gloomy November afternoon. The kids were sitting in a classroom waiting **on tenterhooks** for the bell to ring and end the lesson. The teacher, usually nice and **at ease**, seemed to be **in a black mood**. You could see he had something else **on his mind** and he was really **on edge**. Only little Tom in the back row was **full of beans** as usual. He was **in high spirits** because he had a birthday party later that day. Tom couldn't sit in one place, and when Mr Morris saw him wander around, the teacher **saw red**. He shouted so loudly that Tom almost **jumped out of his skin**. Everybody **felt like a fish out of water** as Mr Morris never shouted at us. Tom was **shaking in his shoes** but luckily, the bell rang and we could go home at last.

Later that day, Tom forgot about everything. His birthday party started at five and he was **on cloud nine** when he saw all the gifts. However, the biggest surprise was yet to come. At nine o'clock Tom's grandparents turned up with a little puppy as a present. Tom was **in seventh heaven** as he had always dreamt of his own dog.

4.



32

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- The kids were waiting impatiently.

- ...

The kids were on tenterhooks.

- The teacher didn't seem relaxed.
- ...
The teacher didn't seem at ease.

- Mr Morris was angry.
- ...
Mr Morris was in a black mood.

- There was something worrying him.
- ...
He had something on his mind.

- He was very nervous.
- ...
He was on edge.

- Tom was full of energy.
- ...
Tom was full of beans.

- He was excited and happy.
- ...
He was in high spirits.

- The teacher got very angry.
- ...
The teacher saw red.

- Tom was very surprised and shocked.
- ...
Tom almost jumped out of his skin.

- We all felt very awkward.
- ...
We felt like a fish out of water.

- Tom was very frightened.
- ...
Tom was shaking in his shoes.

- The child was very happy.
- ...
The child was on cloud nine. / The child was in seventh heaven.

Lesson 9. HEALTH / ILLNESS / DEATH

1.



33

Listen.

NOT TO LOOK ONE'S AGE	to appear to be younger than one is <i>no aparentar la edad de uno</i>
------------------------------	---

Barbara! It's been ages since I last saw you and you haven't changed at all! You certainly don't look your age!

TO LOOK YOUNG FOR ONE'S YEARS	to seem younger than one is, to be youthful <i>aparentar joven para la edad de uno</i>
--------------------------------------	---

Wearing jeans and t-shirts, Mrs Johnson looks incredibly young for her years. Nobody believes she has turned sixty.

TO BE GETTING ON IN YEARS	to be getting old <i>entrar en años</i>
----------------------------------	--

Since his wife died, poor Henry has been getting on in years quite fast. He looks older each day.

TO BE IN THE AUTUMN OF ONE'S LIFE	to live one's last years <i>estar en el otoño de la vida de uno</i>
--	--

Sometimes people find true love in the autumn of their lives and even get married when they are very old.

TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH / TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE	to be in good condition <i>estar bien de salud, estar en plena forma</i>
---	---

She's bought an exercise bike because she promised herself to be fit and in good shape before summer begins.

TO BE IN POOR HEALTH / TO BE IN POOR SHAPE	to be in bad condition <i>estar mal de salud, estar en baja forma</i>
---	--

I've heard Steve is in poor health and can't leave his bed. Let's visit him and cheer him up a bit.

TO FEEL UNDER THE WEATHER / TO LOOK A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER

to feel ill, to look a bit ill
sentirse mal, sentirse enfermo

I feel a little under the weather – I think I've caught a cold.

TO BE OFF COLOUR

to feel slightly ill
no encontrarse bien, estar destemplado

My grandfather has been off colour for a few days. He looks so miserable that I think I'll call the doctor.

TO LOOK RUN-DOWN

to look tired and not healthy
parecer agotado

When we finished redecorating our flat, we were run-down. We were so exhausted that we took a few days off just to rest.

TO CATCH A DISEASE

to become ill
coger una enfermedad

If you don't sleep long enough, your organism gets weak and you can easily catch a disease.

TO BE ON ONE'S LAST LEGS

to be old or in very bad condition
estar en las últimas

It looks as if his father is on his last legs. I'm afraid he will die soon.

TO BE ON ONE'S DEATHBED

to be close to death
estar en el lecho de muerte

On her deathbed, Fred's mother revealed that he was adopted. It's amazing that she managed to keep it a secret until the day she died.

TO HAVE ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE

to be very old and very ill (humorous)
tener un pie en la tumba

Oh, come on Jack! If you don't stop complaining about your health, we'll think that you have one foot in the grave. You're not dying!

TO KICK THE BUCKET

to die
estirar la pata

Didn't you hear? Old Mrs Smith has kicked the bucket. She had a heart attack.

TO DIE BEFORE ONE'S TIME	to die young <i>morir antes de tiempo</i>
---------------------------------	--

Poor Linda was only twenty-seven when they discovered she had cancer. She died much before her time.

2.



34

Listen and repeat.

Barbara doesn't look her age.

In these jeans you look young for your age.

Henry is getting on in years quite fast.

People may find happiness in the autumn of their lives.

She exercises in order to be in good shape.

Steve doesn't leave his bed any more.

I feel a little under the weather today.

My grandpa has been off colour for a few days.

You look run down and you need to rest.

Dress warmly or you'll catch a disease.

His father is on his last legs.

On her deathbed, she revealed the secret.

Jack jokes that he has one foot in the grave.

Old Mrs Smith has kicked the bucket.

Poor Linda died much before her time.

3.



35

Listen.

Getting on in years is a natural process no one can stop. With age we all get weaker, **catch diseases** more easily and tend to **feel under the weather** quite often. Some people are of an opinion that it's better to **die before one's time** than to live and suffer all the illnesses and sadness which old age brings.

I think they are wrong. My grandfather is a living example of a happy elderly gentleman who is **in good shape** despite being **in the autumn of his life**. Grandpa is eighty-five years old but doesn't **look his age**. He's very active and although he sometimes **looks run down** at the end of the day, he would never admit he is **on his last legs**. He keeps telling us he **has one foot in the grave** but everyone knows it's a joke. Grandpa loves our visits. He calls us and asks if we will find the time to see him before he **kicks the bucket**. His sense of humour and active lifestyle keep him **in good health**.

4.



36

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Getting old is a natural process.
- ...
Getting on in years is a natural process.
- With age we get ill more easily.
- ...
With age we catch diseases more easily.
- We tend to feel ill more often.
- ...
We tend to feel under the weather more often.
- Some people wish they could die young.
- ...
Some people wish they could die before their time.
- My grandpa is in good condition.
- ...
My grandpa is in good shape.
- He is very old.
- ...
He is in the autumn of his life.
- He appears to be younger.
- ...
He doesn't look his age.
- He sometimes looks tired.
- ...
He sometimes looks run down.
- He is sometimes tired and in very bad condition.
- ...
He is sometimes on his last legs.
- He says he is almost dead.
- ...
He says he has one foot in the grave.
- He asks us to visit him before he dies.
- ...
He asks us to visit him before he kicks the bucket.
- His sense of humour keeps him in good physical condition.
- ...
His sense of humour keeps him in good health.

Lesson 10. CRIME

1.



37

Listen.

TO COME TO A BAD END	to develop in a criminal way and suffer the consequences (eg. prison) <i>acabar mal</i>
-----------------------------	--

When Jim turned to drugs I warned him he would come to a bad end and I was right. Now he's in prison for drug dealing.

A CAPITAL OFFENCE / A CAPITAL CRIME	an offence which is punished by death <i>delito punible con pena de muerte / crimen con mayúsculas</i>
--	---

The judge found her guilty of a capital offence and she was hanged a year later.

A JAIL BIRD	somebody who has been in prison more than once <i>reincidente</i>
--------------------	--

The villain in this movie is a jail bird who spent fifteen years in four different prisons.

TO SERVE TIME / TO DO TIME	to be in prison <i>estar en prisión, purgar una condena</i>
-----------------------------------	--

John Smith is still serving time after murdering his wife. I don't think he'll be released soon.

TO BE AT LARGE	to be free (of a criminal who escaped or is before arrest) <i>estar libre</i>
-----------------------	--

In today's newspaper we could read that the escaped prisoners haven't been caught yet and are still at large.

TO BE ON PAROLE	(of a prisoner) to have been released from prison for a short time <i>estar en libertad bajo palabra de honor</i>
------------------------	--

The prisoner has been released on condition that he will not commit a crime or try to escape. He's on parole.

TO BREAK PRISON	to escape from prison <i>escapar de prisión</i>
------------------------	--

Yesterday two prisoners broke prison in our town, but luckily they were caught five hours later.

TO GO TO LAW	to take up court proceedings against someone <i>poner un pleito</i>
---------------------	--

After years of violent abuse from her husband, Amy finally decided to go to law. I hope he'll be found guilty and put in jail.

TO HAVE CLEAN HANDS	to be innocent <i>tener las manos limpias, ser inocente</i>
----------------------------	--

I swear I haven't stolen this money! I have clean hands and I can prove I'm innocent!

TO CATCH SOMEONE RED-HANDED	to discover someone doing something illegal or wrong <i>coger a alguien con las manos en la masa</i>
------------------------------------	---

The police caught him red-handed trying to take out the wallet from that woman's pocket. They saw the whole thing.

CRIME DOESN'T PAY	if you do something illegal, you'll probably be caught and punished <i>los delitos no benefician a nadie</i>
--------------------------	---

Crime doesn't pay and sooner or later those who break the law end up in prison.

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY	a situation in which you are charged much more for something than you think you should pay <i>robo a mano armada</i>
-------------------------	---

Four pounds for a glass of apple juice? It's daylight robbery! I will certainly not pay that much.

IN COLD BLOOD	in a cruel and deliberate way <i>a sangre fría</i>
----------------------	---

It was not an accident but a planned, deliberate action. Those unarmed civilians were just shot in cold blood.

TO SET A THIEF / TO CATCH A THIEF	to arrest a thief <i>atrapar a un ladrón</i>
--	---

My family decided to stay up all night to try to catch the thief who was stealing plants from our back garden.

TO BE ON THE ALERT

to be prepared to act immediately
estar sobre aviso, estar en alerta

Over one hundred policemen were put on the alert and they were ready to act immediately when they saw something suspicious.

2.



38

Listen.

Jim came to a bad end.

She was found guilty of a capital offence.

He is a jail bird who has spent years in many prisons.

John Smith is still serving time.

Two prisoners have escaped and are at large now.

He's been released on parole.

They broke prison but were caught a day later.

Finally Amy decided to go to law.

I swear I have clean hands.

The police caught him red-handed.

We all know that crime doesn't pay.

Five pounds for this is just daylight robbery!

Those people were shot in cold blood.

Everybody wanted to catch this thief.

Many policemen were put on the alert.

3.



39

Listen.

- A. Have you heard? Tom Silverblade, the **jail bird** from our district, has **broken prison** again!
- B. You can't be serious! People say he's guilty of **a capital offence**. Everyone knows he's the one who killed poor Mrs Hogan last year.
- A. Yes, someone murdered her **in cold blood** but as Tom wasn't **caught red-handed**, he claims he has **clean hands**.
- B. Well, we have to be **on the alert**. Do you remember? Last time he was **on parole**, he tried to steal Mr Grey's car but the police **caught** him.
- A. Yes, the Greys **went to law** and he was imprisoned for twelve months. I remember that. Well, when Tom was a little boy he was a real troublemaker. Somehow I knew he would **come to a bad end**.
- B. I had the same feeling about him. Look, he has spent half his life in prison but apparently he hasn't learnt that **crime doesn't pay**.

4.



40

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Tom Silverblade has spent years in various prisons.

- ...

Tom Silverblade is a jail bird.

- He has escaped from prison.

- ...

He has broken prison.

- This offence is punished by death.

- ...

This is a capital offence.

- Someone murdered her deliberately.

- ...

Someone murdered her in cold blood.

- He wasn't discovered doing it.

- ...

He wasn't caught red-handed.

- Tom claims he's innocent.

- ...

Tom claims he has clean hands.

- We have to watch out.

- ...

We have to be on the alert.

- He was released from prison for a short time.

- ...

He was on parole.

- The police arrested the thief.

- ...

The police caught the thief.

- The Greys took the case to court.

- ...

The Greys went to law.

- I knew he would end up in prison

- ...

I knew he would come to a bad end.

- If you commit a crime, you'll be punished.

- ...

Crime doesn't pay.

Lesson 11. ENTERTAINMENT

1.



41

Listen.

TO HAVE A NIGHT OUT	to go out for an evening of entertainment <i>salir por la noche</i>
----------------------------	--

Let's go somewhere tonight! We haven't had a night out for months and I really can't sit at home any longer.

TO MAKE A DAY OF SOMETHING	to spend the whole day enjoying oneself <i>pasárselo bien todo el día</i>
-----------------------------------	--

Yesterday we rented some movies and made a day of watching our favourite films on video. We spent all day in front of the TV screen.

TO HAVE A GOOD TIME / TO HAVE A GREAT TIME	to enjoy oneself <i>divertirse de lo lindo, pasárselo a tope</i>
---	---

It was the best wedding I had ever been to. I had a great time and I'm sure all the other guests enjoyed it too.

TO GO OUT ON THE TOWN	to go out and enjoy oneself in the town <i>salir una noche de marcha</i>
------------------------------	---

When Susan passed her last exam, she and her boyfriend went out on the town and enjoyed themselves all night long.

TO WEAR ONE'S SUNDAY BEST	to wear one's best clothes <i>vestirse de gala</i>
----------------------------------	---

The Grey family, in their Sunday best, set out to church. Even little Betty was wearing her best pink dress and shining white shoes.

A BLIND DATE	an arranged meeting for two people who have never met each other before <i>una cita a ciegas</i>
---------------------	---

I would never go on a blind date. I think it's quite risky to spend an evening with someone you've never seen before.

TO THROW A PARTY	to organise a party and invite people <i>dar una fiesta</i>
-------------------------	--

When Joe turned eighteen, he threw a huge party in a pub and invited almost forty people.

TO BE THE LIFE AND SOUL OF THE PARTY	to be someone who enjoys social occasions and is fun to be with <i>ser el alma de la fiesta</i>
---	--

Let's invite Bob! He's the life and soul of the party and people always enjoy his company.

HARD DRINKS	strong drinks <i>bebidas alcohólicas</i>
--------------------	---

Joe promised his parents they wouldn't have any hard drinks during the party, just beer and some wine.

TO BE HIGH	to be extremely high-spirited after taking alcohol or drugs <i>estar drogado, estar colocado</i>
-------------------	---

After five glasses of vodka he was so high that he started singing and we had to leave the restaurant.

THIN BEER	weak or watery beer <i>cerveza ligera</i>
------------------	--

The food at the party was a disappointment. All we had was thin beer in plastic cups and some fatty snacks on our tables.

TO STAND SOMEONE A DRINK	to pay for someone's drink <i>invitar a alguien a un trago</i>
---------------------------------	---

When we broke the news to Jack, he was so happy that he stood us all a drink. Later he even paid for the snacks.

TO GO DUTCH	to share the cost of something, especially a meal <i>pagar cada uno lo suyo</i>
--------------------	--

Mary insisted on paying for the meal but we decided to go Dutch and everyone paid for themselves.

TO FEEL LIKE DOING SOMETHING	to have a desire to do something <i>apetecer hacer algo</i>
-------------------------------------	--

Carol is tired and she doesn't feel like going out tonight so let's stay at home and prepare something special for supper.

TO BE KEEN ON	to like <i>gustar</i>
----------------------	--------------------------

My flatmates would like to have a party but I have to study so I'm not very keen on the idea.

2.



42

Listen and repeat.

We haven't had a night out for months.

Yesterday we made a day of watching films on DVD.

I had a great time at the party last night.

Let's go out on the town and have some fun.

Little Betty was wearing her Sunday best.

I would never go on a blind date.

When he turned eighteen, he threw a huge party.

Bob is the life and soul of the party.

No hard drinks are allowed at this party.

He was so high that he fell asleep on the table.

All we drank was thin beer in plastic cups.

Let me stand you a drink.

After the dinner we decided to go Dutch.

I feel like watching a good comedy tonight.

I'm not very keen on horror movies.

3.



43

Listen.

People think I'm a bore. Let's face it – it's not typical of a teenager to **be keen on** classical music and ballet. Yesterday, for example, I **made a day of watching** my favourite ballets on video. My friends know I'm not **the life and soul of the party** so they have stopped inviting me and I haven't **had a night out** for months.

Last week, however, Monica was **throwing a party** and asked me to come. She even arranged **a blind date** for me and assured me I would **have a great time**. I didn't **feel like going** at all but I couldn't disappoint Monica. In the evening I **wore my Sunday best** and met Susan – my date at the pub. I **stood us a drink** so we could feel more at ease and then we went to Monica's place. There were lots of **hard drinks** on the tables and many guests were already **high**. After a while I got so dizzy that I had to leave. Susan left with me. We went to a small café and had supper together. I insisted on paying for it but finally we **went Dutch**. It was a fantastic evening and I hope I will see her again.

4.



44

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- I like classical music.
- ...
I'm keen on classical music.
- I spent a day watching ballets.
- ...
I made a day of watching ballets.
- I don't enjoy social occasions.
- ...
I'm not the life and soul of the party.
- I haven't gone out for an evening for months.
- ...
I haven't had a night out for months.
- Monika was organising a party.
- ...
Monika was throwing a party.
- She arranged a meeting for two people who had never met before.
- ...
She arranged a blind date.
- She said I would enjoy myself.
- ...
She said I would have a great time.
- I didn't want to go.
- ...
I didn't feel like going.
- I wore my best clothes.
- ...
I wore my Sunday best.
- I paid for our drinks.
- ...
I stood us some drinks.
- There were strong drinks on the tables.
- ...
There were hard drinks on the tables.
- Many guests were drunk.
- ...
Many guests were high.
- We shared the cost of the supper.
- ...
We went Dutch.

Lesson 12. HOLIDAY / TRAVEL

1.



45

Listen.

A PACKAGE HOLIDAY	a tour arranged by a travel agent; transportation, food and lodging are all provided at an inclusive price <i>paquete de vacaciones, viaje organizado</i>
--------------------------	--

If you don't want to worry about the details of your trip to Greece, I suggest taking a package holiday. The travel agent will arrange everything for you.

A COACH PARTY	a group of people travelling on an organised journey or excursion on a private bus <i>grupo organizado</i>
----------------------	---

It's quite expensive to visit this museum individually but coach parties of over twenty people are offered big discounts.

TO SLEEP IN THE OPEN	to sleep out of doors <i>dormir al aire libre</i>
-----------------------------	--

The night was so beautiful that we didn't put up our tents and slept in the open.

TO TRAVEL LIGHT	to travel without much luggage <i>viajar con poco equipaje</i>
------------------------	---

My car is very small so we can't take much luggage with us. We will have to travel light.

TO BE ON THE ROAD	to travel to different places <i>ponerse en camino</i>
--------------------------	---

The band gives a lot of concerts all over the country and it spends four months a year on the road.

TO HIT THE ROAD	to start a journey <i>salir en coche, tirar millas</i>
------------------------	---

I don't like driving when it's dark so I'd better hit the road before it gets too late.

TO MAKE A TRIP THROUGH THE COUNTRY / TO GO ON A ROUND TRIP THROUGH THE COUNTRY	to go around the country and return to the starting point <i>hacer un viaje por todo el país</i>
---	---

We are planning to rent a caravan and make a round trip through America to show the kids as much as possible. We start and finish in Seattle.

TO BREAK THE JOURNEY	to stop somewhere on the way to somewhere else <i>hacer una parada en el camino</i>
-----------------------------	--

David was getting tired of driving so we had to break the journey and have some sleep.

TO TRAVEL THROUGH / TO TRAVEL NON-STOP	to travel without any breaks <i>viajar sin parar</i>
---	---

Although we had to cover five hundred kilometres, we decided to travel through and we didn't even stop for coffee.

TO CROSS A BORDER	to enter another country <i>cruzar una frontera</i>
--------------------------	--

When you cross the border and enter another country, you must go through customs control.

TO HITCH A RIDE / TO HITCH-HIKE	to stand at the roadside and ask a car driver for a ride <i>hacer autoestop</i>
--	--

Many young people choose to hitch-hike during their holidays because it's cheap. They don't realise that asking a stranger for a ride can be dangerous.

TO GET ITCHY FEET	to have a very strong or irresistible impulse to travel <i>tener ansias de viajar</i>
--------------------------	--

Why have you bought all these travel brochures? Are you getting itchy feet and planning a new journey?

TO GO ON A GUIDED TOUR	to do the sights with a guide <i>ir con guía turístico</i>
-------------------------------	---

When we came to London for the first time, we didn't know our way around so we contacted a travel agency and went on a guided tour around the city.

TO DO A SIGHT-SEEING TOUR	to look round buildings, museums, etc. <i>hacer una excursion turística</i>
----------------------------------	--

Betty wanted to see the most important buildings and monuments in Gdansk so we decided to do a sight-seeing tour with her.

TO TAKE A SHORTCUT	to choose a quicker and more direct way of getting somewhere than the usual one <i>tomar un atajo, tirar por un atajo</i>
---------------------------	--

We thought we would be late for the show so we took a shortcut through the park and this route turned out to be much quicker.

2.



46

Listen and repeat.

I advise you to take a package holiday.

Coach parties are offered big discounts.

The night was warm and we slept in the open.

We will travel light this time.

I spend four months a year on the road.

It's time for me to hit the road.

We want to go on a round trip through Spain.

David had to break the journey and have some rest.

We travelled through and didn't stop at all.

They crossed the border at midnight.

Many young people hitch-hike during their holidays.

I'm getting itchy feet again.

We went on a guided tour around the city.

Betty did a sight-seeing tour with her cousin.

We took a shortcut through the park.

3.



47

Listen.

- A. I can see **you're getting itchy feet** again!
- B. Yes, I'm planning **to make a round trip** through Slovakia this time.
- A. How are you going to get there?
- B. I'm taking a train and **travelling through** till I **cross the border**. Then I'm going to **hitch-hike**. In this way I can **break the journey** whenever I want.
- A. Wouldn't you prefer to go **a package holiday**?

- B. Oh, no. I tried to **go on a guided tour** once and coach parties are just not for me.
 A. How long will you be away?
 B. Well, I'm going to **be on the road** for four weeks.
 A. Is this all your luggage?
 B. Yes, I like to **travel light**.
 A. Fine, but where are you going to sleep?
 B. I will **sleep in the open** if the weather is good enough.
 A. So when are you leaving?
 B. I'm **hitting the road** at 5 a.m. tomorrow.
 A. Well, good luck and send me a postcard.

4.



48

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| - I have a strong desire to travel again.
- ...
<i>I'm getting itchy feet again.</i> | - I don't like arranged tours.
- ...
<i>I don't like package holidays.</i> |
| - I'll go around Slovakia.
- ...
<i>I'll make a round trip through Slovakia.</i> | - Organised groups of tourists are not for me.
- ...
<i>Coach parties are not for me.</i> |
| - I'll travel without a break.
- ...
<i>I'll travel through.</i> | - I'll travel for four weeks.
- ...
<i>I'll be on the road for four weeks.</i> |
| - I'll stop when I enter Slovakia.
- ...
<i>I'll stop when I cross the border.</i> | - I like travelling with little luggage.
- ...
<i>I like travelling light.</i> |
| - I'm going to ask drivers for a lift.
- ...
<i>I'm going to hitch-hike.</i> | - I'll sleep out of doors.
- ...
<i>I'll sleep in the open.</i> |
| - I can stop whenever I want.
- ...
<i>I can break the journey whenever I want.</i> | - I'm starting the journey tomorrow.
- ...
<i>I'm hitting the road tomorrow.</i> |

Lesson 13. FAMILY

1.



49

Listen.

A GRASS WIDOW	a woman who spends a lot of time alone, often because her husband is working in another place <i>mujer cuyo marido está ausente</i>
----------------------	--

Since my husband got a new job far away from home, I've become a grass widow and I admit I feel very lonely at times.

A HENPECKED HUSBAND	a man who is always being told what to do by his wife <i>calzonazos</i>
----------------------------	--

Chris is too afraid to disagree with his wife and he always does what she wants so no wonder his friends call him a henpecked husband.

TO WEAR THE TROUSERS	to be the person in a relationship who makes all the important decisions <i>llevar los pantalones, mandar</i>
-----------------------------	--

Ann is the one who wears the trousers in this family. She decides about the family budget and other most important things.

AN OLD MAID	a woman who has never married <i>una solterona</i>
--------------------	---

My neighbour is an old maid. After her fiancé died in a car accident many years ago, she decided never to get married.

TO LEAD A WOMAN TO THE ALTAR	to marry a woman <i>llevar a una mujer al altar</i>
-------------------------------------	--

After years of friendship, Dave finally led Denise to the altar. They got married in a beautiful old church in Oxford.

A CONFIRMED BACHELOR	a man who doesn't want to get married <i>un solterón empedernido</i>
-----------------------------	---

It's no use trying to find Kevin a wife. He's a confirmed bachelor and he said he would never get married.

TO HAVE AN AFFAIR	to have a secret sexual relationship with someone <i>tener una aventura amorosa</i>
--------------------------	--

When Mallory found out that her husband had cheated on her and had an affair with his secretary, she kicked him out of the house.

FLESH AND BLOOD	relative <i>carne y hueso, la familia</i>
------------------------	--

How can you be so cruel to your son? He's your own flesh and blood! You shouldn't treat your family members in this way.

TO RUN THE STREETS (of children)	to be unattended by parents <i>correr por las calles</i>
---	---

Nowadays many parents are too busy to notice that their children are running the streets unattended, asking for trouble.

TO PLAY TRUANT	to stay away from school without permission <i>hacer novillos</i>
-----------------------	--

Nick played truant nine days last month so the headmaster had to call his mother to inform her about her son's absences.

TO BE THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY	to be someone who is regarded by other members of a family as a failure or embarrassment <i>ser la oveja negra de la familia</i>
--	---

My mother was the black sheep of the family – she ran away at seventeen to marry a painter and her parents never forgave her.

TO FOLLOW IN SOMEONE'S FOOTSTEPS	to do the same job or the same things in life as someone else, especially a member of your family <i>seguir los pasos de alguien</i>
---	---

My father is an actor and when I decided to follow in his footsteps and become an actress myself, he was very supportive.

THE GENERATION GAP	the lack of understanding between older and younger people <i>brecha generacional</i>
---------------------------	--

Despite a big age difference between me and my mother, we've never felt any generation gap. We understand each other perfectly.

**TO BE BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON
IN ONE'S MOUTH**

to be the son or daughter of a very rich family
*nacer en una cuna de oro, nacer con un pan
 debajo del brazo*

He's never been concerned with money, which is quite natural of someone who was born with a silver spoon in their mouth. His parents are rich enough to provide for all his needs.

BLUE BLOOD

royal or noble ancestry
sangre azul

When she was studying her family tree, she discovered that her great grandmother belonged to a noble family and so she has a bit of blue blood coursing through her veins.

2.**50****Listen and repeat.**

My husband works abroad and I'm a grass widow.

Chris is a henpecked husband.

Ann is the one who wears the trousers in this family.

My neighbour is an old maid.

Dave has finally led Denise to the altar.

Kevin is a confirmed bachelor and he'll never marry.

Her husband had an affair with his secretary.

Tommy is your own flesh and blood.

Many children run the streets unattended.

I never played truant when I was at school.

Uncle Steve was the black sheep of the family.

I will follow in my father's footsteps some day.

The generation gap causes big problems in every family.

He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

I discovered there is blue blood in my family.

3.**51****Listen.**

My grandma told me once that there is **blue blood** in our veins. Well, to me my family seems quite common and I can't trace any nobility in the way we live. My mother is practically a **grass widow** as my father spends eight months a year at sea. When he's home, he turns into a quiet **henpecked husband** and it's my mum who **wears the trousers** in my family.

My brother Leo is a **confirmed bachelor** and he swears he will never **lead any woman to the altar**. He is said to be **the black sheep of the family**. He **played truant** a lot when he was at school

and now refuses to find himself a job. There are fights between him and our mother but Leo claims it's all because of **the generation gap**.

My sister Clair was afraid of becoming an **old maid** so when she turned twenty she married our next-door neighbour. They have three children now and they usually **run the streets** completely unattended.

Thus, as you can see, my family is quite ordinary. Sometimes I can't believe they are my own **flesh and blood**.

4.



52

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Our family is of noble origin.
- ...
Our family has blue blood in their veins.
- My mother is often alone as my father works far away from home.
- ...
My mother is a grass widow.
- My father does what my mum tells him.
- ...
My father is a henpecked husband.
- My mother makes all the important decisions in the family.
- ...
My mother wears the trousers in my family.
- Leo doesn't want to get married.
- ...
Leo is a confirmed bachelor.
- He will never marry anybody.
- ...
He will never lead a woman to the altar.
- Leo is a failure and a disappointment.
- ...
Leo is the black sheep of the family.
- He stayed away from school without permission.
- ...
He played truant.
- They fight because of a big difference in age.
- ...
They fight because of the generation gap.

- Clair was afraid she would never get married.
- ...
Clair was afraid she would become an old maid.

- The kids are often unattended by their parents.
- ...
Their kids often run the streets.

- I can't believe they are my relatives.
- ...
I can't believe they are my flesh and blood.

PART 2. DIFFERENT IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Lesson 14. ANIMALS

1.



53

Listen.

TO KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

to achieve two aims with only one effort
matar dos pájaros de un tiro

I killed two birds with one stone and saw some old friends when I was in Brighton on business.

TO TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS

to decide to face a problem rather than avoid it
coger el toro por los cuernos

Whenever Sue has a problem, she doesn't just sit and wait but takes the bull by the horns and tries to solve it one way or the other.

TO HAVE BUTTERFLIES IN ONE'S STOMACH

to feel physical discomfort in one's stomach because of nervousness
tener un cosquilleo en el estómago (por los nervios)

When Joe proposed to me, I was so excited and nervous that I felt butterflies in my stomach

TO LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

to reveal a secret
revelar un secreto, chivarse de algo

I asked her not to tell anyone but of course she let the cat out of the bag and now everybody knows I'm in love.

TO GO TO THE DOGS

to decline into a very bad state
echarse a perder, descarriarse

Nobody took care of the building so after twenty years it went to the dogs completely. Now it's a ruin.

TO LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE	to avoid mentioning the subject as it could cause trouble <i>dejar las cosas como están, no avivar el fuego</i>
---------------------------------	--

George felt he should confront his brother and tell him he was a liar but this would cause a fight so he didn't say a word and let sleeping dogs lie.

TO HAVE OTHER FISH TO FRY	to have more important tasks to attend to <i>tener algo mejor que hacer</i>
----------------------------------	--

Whenever Helen asks her husband to help her with the kids, he says he has other fish to fry. I think all these important tasks he has to attend to are just an excuse.

TO TAKE THE LION'S SHARE	to take the largest part <i>llevarse la mejor tajada</i>
---------------------------------	---

After winning a lottery we were planning to share the money equally but Steve took the lion's share and left the country. We were left with just a small part of what we had won.

TO BUY A PIG IN A POKE	to buy or accept something without first seeing it or knowing what it's like <i>comprar a ciegas</i>
-------------------------------	---

I never buy clothes from a catalogue. Without trying them on first, it's like buying a pig in a poke.

TO SMELL A RAT	to detect something suspicious <i>darse cuenta que hay gato encerrado</i>
-----------------------	--

We were planning to play a trick on Peter but he detected there was something suspicious going on. He smelled a rat immediately.

TO COOK SOMEONE'S GOOSE	to spoil someone's plans either intentionally or unintentionally <i>arruinar las posibilidades de alguien</i>
--------------------------------	--

My little brother really cooked my goose when he told my parents what present I had for them. He ruined my chance to surprise them.

TO HAVE A BEE IN ONE'S BONNET	to keep talking about something again and again <i>tener una cosa metida en la cabeza, estar obsesionado con una sola idea</i>
--------------------------------------	---

She's got a real bee in her bonnet about saving electricity and keeps telling us to switch off the lights, turn off the TV and so on.

TO RAIN CATS AND DOGS	to rain heavily <i>llover a cántaros</i>
------------------------------	---

It's raining cats and dogs! If you are planning to leave, you'd better wait until it stops raining so heavily.

TO GO AT A SNAIL'S PACE	to go extremely slowly <i>ir lento como una tortuga</i>
--------------------------------	--

Thousands of people were driving to spend the weekend outside New York so we were moving very slowly as the traffic was going at a snail's pace.

TO BE A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING	to seem to be pleasant and friendly but be in fact dangerous or evil <i>ser un lobo con piel de oveja</i>
---	--

Tom can be dangerous so be careful with him. On the surface warm and charming, he might prove to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

2.



54

Listen and repeat.

I killed two birds with one stone.

He didn't wait and took the bull by the horns.

I have butterflies in my stomach before each exam.

She let the cat out of the bag and spoiled the surprise.

This building has gone to the dogs lately.

He didn't say a word and let sleeping dogs lie.

He had other fish to fry and left.

Steve took the lion's share of the money.

I would never buy a pig in a poke.

Peter smelled a rat immediately.

I wanted to surprise him but he cooked my goose.

She has a bee in her bonnet about having a baby.

It's raining cats and dogs again!

We were moving at a snail's pace.

Tom proved to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

3.



55

Listen.

Ben seemed to **have a bee in his bonnet** about having a little cottage somewhere in the country. When he finally found a perfect offer on the Internet, he decided to see the place. He wouldn't like to **buy a pig in a poke**.

It was **raining cats and dogs** when he and his business partner, Matthew, were sitting on the train to a small village near London. They had some business to do there so Ben decided to **kill two birds with one stone** and see the cottage as well. The train went **at a snail's pace** so they had time to talk. Matthew didn't know about Ben's plans. At the end of the journey, however, Ben **let the cat out of the bag**.

Later, when they were about to take a train back, Matthew said that he **had other fish to fry** and he stayed in the village. At that point Ben could **smell a rat** but he **let the sleeping dogs lie** and didn't say a word. He **had butterflies in his stomach** on his way back. Having reached the office, he decided to **take the bull by the horns** and confront Matthew openly.

After a short telephone conversation Ben found out that Matthew had **cooked his goose** as he had bought the cottage for himself. He turned out to **be a wolf in sheep's clothing** and Ben wished he had kept his mouth shut.

4.



56

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Ben kept talking about buying a cottage.
- ...
Ben had a bee in his bonnet about buying a cottage.
- He didn't want to buy it without seeing it first.
- ...
He didn't want to buy a pig in a poke.
- It was raining heavily.
- ...
It was raining cats and dogs.
- Ben did some business and saw the cottage as well.
- ...
Ben killed two birds with one stone.
- The train went very slowly.
- ...
The train went at a snail's pace.
- Ben revealed his secret.
- ...
Ben let the cat out of the bag.

- Matthew had other tasks to attend to.
- ...
Mathew had other fish to fry.

- Ben detected something suspicious.
- ...
Ben smelled a rat.

- He didn't mention the subject to avoid trouble.
- ...
He let sleeping dogs lie.

- He was very worried.
- ...
He had butterflies in his stomach.

- He decided to face the problem.
- ...
He decided to take the bull by the horns.

- Matthew spoiled Ben's plans.
- ...
Matthew cooked Ben's goose.

- Matthew turned out not to be a real friend.
- ...
Matthew turned out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Lesson 15. PARTS OF THE BODY

1.



57

Listen.

TO DO SOMETHING BEHIND SOMEONE'S BACK

to do something without one's knowledge, in a way which is unfair
hacer algo a espaldas de alguien

Ben must be informed about our plans. I don't want to do anything behind his back.

TO MAKE NO BONES ABOUT SOMETHING

to say clearly what you think or feel although you may embarrass or offend somebody
ir directo al grano, no vacilar en hacer algo

My mother-in-law admits quite openly that she doesn't like me. At family meetings she makes no bones about how much she hates me.

TO GET SOMETHING OFF ONE'S CHEST

to tell someone about something that has been worrying you in order to make you feel better
desahogarse

Come on! Tell me what's troubling you. You will feel better once you get it off your chest.

TO BE ALL EARS

to be very eager to hear what someone's going to say
ser todo oídos

Mary was very curious to find out what had happened at the party so when I started talking, she was all ears.

TO BE AN EYE-OPENER

to be an experience from which you learn something surprising or new
ser muy revelador

This film has changed the way I see mother-daughter relationships. It was a real eye-opener.

TO HAVE AN EYE FOR SOMETHING

to be good at noticing something
tener buen ojo para algo

Helen has an eye for details so when we met yesterday she immediately noticed my new make-up.

TO HAVE SOMETHING AT ONE'S FINGERTIPS	to have knowledge or information ready and available to use very easily <i>tener algo en la mano</i>
--	---

If you need any more information, it's ready and available. We have all the facts and figures at our fingertips.

TO MAKE ONE'S HAIR STAND ON END	to make someone feel very frightened <i>ponérsele a uno el pelo de punta</i>
--	---

I'm afraid of heights and the thought of trying bungee-jumping is so terrifying that it makes my hair stand on end.

TO LEARN SOMETHING BY HEART	to memorise something <i>aprender algo de memoria</i>
------------------------------------	--

The teacher asked us to learn the poem by heart so I spent all evening memorising it.

TO PULL SOMEONE'S LEG	to tell someone something that is not true as a way of joking with them <i>tomar el pelo a alguien</i>
------------------------------	---

I thought she was pulling my leg when she told me about her engagement but she wasn't joking at all.

TO HAVE SOMETHING ON THE TIP OF ONE'S TONGUE	to want to say something but cannot remember it <i>tener algo en la punta de la lengua</i>
---	---

I had her surname on the tip of my tongue but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't remember it.

TO STICK ONE'S NECK OUT	to give an opinion which other people may not like or are frightened to give <i>arriesgarse</i>
--------------------------------	--

All the staff members were of an opinion that the manager had made a mistake but nobody wanted to stick their neck out and say it out loud. They were afraid of losing their jobs.

TO BE GETTING OUT OF HAND	to be getting out of control <i>estar fuera de control</i>
----------------------------------	---

When they started arguing, things got a little out of hand and the neighbours called the police to get the situation under control.

TO SPLIT HAIRS

to argue or worry about small, unimportant details
*ser un tiquismiquis, discutir sobre detalles
 mínimos*

Oh, stop splitting hairs! It's natural for a teenager to spend more time with his friends instead of his parents. There is really nothing to worry about.

TO HAVE A CHIP ON ONE'S SHOULDER

to easily become offended or angry because you think you've been treated unfairly in the past
guardar rencor

She has a chip on her shoulder about her height so, please, don't mention this subject because she might get offended.

2.



58

Listen and repeat.

We mustn't do anything behind his back.

He made no bones about what he really thought.

Tell me! Just get it off your chest!

Go on. I'm all ears.

This film was a real eye-opener.

You have an eye for details.

The information you need is at your fingertips.

The scream made my hair stand on end.

The students must learn the poem by heart.

I don't like such jokes so stop pulling my leg!

I had her name on the tip of my tongue.

Only Paul was brave enough to stick his neck out.

The situation is getting out of hand.

There is no need to worry so stop splitting hairs!

He has a chip on his shoulder about his height.

3.



59

Listen.

I **have a chip on my shoulder** about loyalty in a marriage. I always suspect my husband of **doing something behind my back**. Whenever he's late from work I **make no bones about** how jealous I am. I tell him "OK, what is it this time? I'm **all ears!**" I can see he is getting tired of this. He says I'm **splitting hairs**.

But I really suffer! One day I broke down and I wanted to **get it off my chest** so I called my friend Lucy. She **has an eye for details** so I asked her if she had noticed that the situation in my marriage

was **getting out of hand**. At first she refused to talk to me because she didn't want to **stick her neck out**. I assured her that I needed her honest opinion. What I heard **made my hair stand on end**. At first I thought she was **pulling my leg** but she was serious when she told me I was the one who was destroying my marriage. We talked for hours and this conversation **was** a real **eye-opener**. I decided to go to therapy.

4.



60

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- I'm very sensitive about loyalty.
- ...
I have a chip on my shoulder about loyalty.
- I suspect that my husband is cheating on me.
- ...
I suspect my husband is doing something behind my back.
- I'm quite open about how jealous I am.
- ...
I make no bones about how jealous I am.
- I'm ready to listen to him.
- ...
I'm all ears!
- I'm arguing about unimportant things.
- ...
I'm splitting hairs.
- I wanted to share my pain with someone.
- ...
I wanted to get it off my chest.
- Lucy is good at noticing details.
- ...
Lucy has an eye for details.
- The situation was getting out of control.
- ...
The situation was getting out of hand.
- Lucy was afraid to express what she really thought.
- ...
Lucy didn't want to stick her neck out.

- The truth frightened me.
- ...
The truth made my hair stand on end.

- At first I thought she was joking.
- ...
At first I thought she was pulling my leg.

- This conversation helped me learn new things.
- ...
This conversation was a real eye-opener.

Lesson 16. COLOURS

1.



61

Listen.

TO BEAT SOMEBODY BLACK AND BLUE	to beat him so that he has many bruises <i>poner a alguien morado, dar a alguien una paliza</i>
--	--

He was beaten black and blue in school yesterday. There are bruises all over his body.

TO FEEL BLUE	to be sad or miserable <i>sertirse deprimido</i>
---------------------	---

Autumn always makes me feel blue. I get sad and depressed when it rains too often.

TO HAVE GREEN FINGERS	to be good at gardening <i>tener habilidad para la jardinería</i>
------------------------------	--

My mother is very good at gardening and her plants look really impressive. People say she has green fingers.

TO BE GREEN	to be too trusting, inexperienced <i>estar verde, sin experiencia</i>
--------------------	--

Tom is very young and inexperienced and I think he is too green to be responsible for this project.

TO BE IN THE RED	to owe money to one's bank <i>estar en números rojos, deber dinero</i>
-------------------------	---

We won't get a loan from this bank as we're already in the red. We owe it two thousand pounds.

TO BE IN THE BLACK	not to be in debt, to have more assets than liabilities <i>ganar dinero, hacer pasta</i>
---------------------------	---

The Browns will pay off all their debts by March and then they will be in the black again.

A BLACKOUT	a sudden loss of consciousness or memory <i>desmayo, un apagón (de luz)</i>
-------------------	--

Unfortunately, she had a blackout and doesn't remember who hit her and what happened next. She was unconscious for half an hour.

OUT OF THE BLUE	suddenly <i>como llovido del cielo, por sorpresa</i>
------------------------	---

I got a bit of a shock when, out of the blue, after twenty years, he turned up on my doorstep.

A WHITE LIE	a small lie which does not harm anybody <i>una mentira piadosa</i>
--------------------	---

People sometimes tell white lies just to avoid hurting someone's feelings.

WHITE COFFEE	coffee with milk <i>café con leche</i>
---------------------	---

Sharon popped in this morning to borrow some milk because she won't leave the house before having a white coffee for breakfast.

TO SEE SOMETHING THROUGH ROSE-COLOURED SPECTACLES	to think something is more pleasant than it really is <i>ver algo de color de rosa</i>
--	---

She has only nice memories from her childhood but I'm afraid she sees it through rose-coloured spectacles as her early years weren't really so happy.

TO PAINT THE TOWN RED	to celebrate wildly and noisily in public places <i>irse de juerga</i>
------------------------------	---

When Jack graduated from college, he and his friends went out to paint the town red. They had fun in pubs and restaurants all night long.

TO SEE THE RED LIGHT	to recognise danger <i>ver el peligro</i>
-----------------------------	--

We were just about to jump into the lake when John saw the red light and stopped us. He probably saved our lives as the water in that place was very shallow.

TO PUT OUT THE RED CARPET (FOR SOMEONE)	to welcome him in a special way <i>dar a alguien la bienvenida con honores</i>
--	---

Every time we visit aunt Grace she puts out the red carpet for us. She always gives us such a warm welcome.

A RED HERRING	something that takes people's attention away from the main subject <i>cambiar de tema, algo que distrae del tema que se discute</i>
----------------------	--

His comment on the political situation was just a red herring as he tried to avoid talking about his problems and to divert our attention to another subject.

2.



62

Listen and repeat.

He was beaten black and blue in school yesterday.

Autumn always makes me feel blue.

My mother has green fingers.

He is too green to be held responsible for this.

We are in the red so we won't get this loan.

They've paid off their debts and are in the black again.

She had a blackout and doesn't remember a thing.

He turned up out of the blue.

People often tell white lies.

I love white coffee.

She sees her boyfriend through rose-coloured spectacles.

We painted the town red last weekend.

John saw the red light and didn't jump.

Aunt Grace always puts out a red carpet for us.

His last comment was just a red herring.

3.



63

Listen.

I almost had a **blackout** when I saw Sue Thorn on my doorstep yesterday. It was a shock as she appeared **out of the blue** after five years with a little girl beside her.

We were a couple once. I admit we had a lot of fun together. We used to **paint the town red** every weekend and although we both worked, we were always **in the red**. We were **too green** to start saving up. I remember our little flat that we rented. It was full of plants as Sue had **green fingers**. Whenever she **felt blue**, I used to make her **white coffee** and assure her I would never leave her. It was a **white lie**. She **saw me through rose-coloured spectacles** so she couldn't notice that I was not ready to commit. When she started to talk about having a baby, I **saw the red light**. I moved out the next day and we haven't met since then.

And now, seeing her after so long, I was too surprised to **put out the red carpet for her**, I just didn't know what to say.

4.



64

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- This conversation helped me learn new things.
- ...
This conversation was a real eye-opener.
- I almost lost consciousness.
- ...
I almost had a blackout.
- She appeared suddenly.
- ...
She appeared out of the blue.
- We used to go out and celebrate.
- ...
We used to paint the town red.
- We were always in debt.
- ...
We were always in the red.
- We were very inexperienced.
- ...
We were green.
- Sue was good at taking care of plants.
- ...
Sue had green fingers.
- She sometimes felt sad.
- ...
She sometimes felt blue.
- I made her coffee with milk.
- ...
I made her white coffee.
- I told her small lies.
- ...
I told her white lies.
- She thought I was better than I really was.
- ...
She saw me through rose-coloured spectacles.
- I recognised the danger.
- ...
I saw the red light.
- I was too surprised to welcome her warmly.
- ...
I was too surprised to put out the red carpet for her.

Lesson 17. COMPARISON

1.



65

Listen.

AS BOLD AS A LION	very brave <i>orgulloso como león</i>
--------------------------	--

Little Frank is as bold as a lion. He is very brave and has announced he will become a fire-fighter in the future.

AS BRITTLE AS GLASS	fragile <i>frágil como la porcelana</i>
----------------------------	--

Judy is very sensitive and fragile. In fact she is as brittle as glass so be careful not to hurt her.

AS BUSY AS A BEE	very busy <i>ocupadísimo, muy metido en el trabajo</i>
-------------------------	---

With this huge house and four kids around, Mary has a lot of work. She is as busy as a bee all day long.

AS CHANGEABLE AS THE WEATHER	somebody who changes his moods very often <i>cambiante como el tiempo</i>
-------------------------------------	--

It is quite natural for Henry to be happy at one moment and very sad or depressed an hour later. He is as changeable as the weather.

AS COOL AS A CUCUMBER	calm at a time of difficulty or danger <i>tan pancho, tan fresco</i>
------------------------------	---

Everyone panicked when they saw the bear. Only Paul stayed as cool as a cucumber and distracted its attention calmly and cleverly.

AS CUNNING AS A FOX	clever and deceitful <i>astuto como un zorro</i>
----------------------------	---

Becky is very clever and deceitful. Remember she can be as cunning as a fox so don't let her fool you.

AS DIFFERENT AS CHALK AND CHEESE	very different <i>se parecen como un huevo a una castaña</i>
---	---

Although they are twins, they don't look alike. In fact they are as different as chalk and cheese both in appearance and character.

AS EASY AS ABC	very easy <i>tan fácil como que dos y dos son cuatro</i>
-----------------------	---

When I tried horse-riding, I soon found out that it was as easy as ABC. I learned it quite fast.

AS FIT AS A FIDDLE	very fit, of excellent physical health <i>sano como una rosa</i>
---------------------------	---

Agnes is as fit as a fiddle. She's always enjoyed an excellent physical condition.

AS FIRM AS A ROCK	resolute <i>firme como una roca</i>
--------------------------	--

It's no use trying to make him change his mind. He's as firm as a rock and I'm sure he'll stick to what he has decided.

AS GOOD AS GOLD	of a well-behaved child or an orderly person <i>buenísimo, un angelito</i>
------------------------	---

Her children are as good as gold. She's never had any problems with them.

AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER	of very little weight <i>ligero como una pluma</i>
------------------------------	---

When little Sue broke her leg, I had to carry her to hospital. Thanks God she's as light as a feather.

AS LIKE AS TWO PEAS IN A POD	very much alike in appearance or character <i>parecidos como dos gotas de agua</i>
-------------------------------------	---

Mary and Ashley are like two peas in a pod. They are so similar that I never know which one I'm talking to.

AS POOR AS A CHURCH MOUSE	very poor <i>más pobre que uno que se está bañando, no tiene dónde caerse muerto</i>
----------------------------------	---

When Jane divorced her husband, she was left without a penny. Now she's as poor as a church mouse.

AS QUICK AS LIGHTNING	very fast <i>rápido como un rayo</i>
------------------------------	---

When it comes to cooking, James is as quick as lightning! He can prepare delicious food within minutes!

2.



66

Listen and repeat.

Frank is little but he's as bold as a lion.

Judy is as brittle as glass so be careful with her.

With all this housework she is as busy as a bee.

Henry can be as changeable as the weather.

Only Paul stayed as cool as a cucumber when panic broke out.

Betty is clever and as cunning as a fox.

Those brothers are as different as chalk and cheese.

Horse-riding is as easy as ABC.

Agnes is slim and as fit as a fiddle.

He's as firm as a rock and won't change his mind.

Her children are as good as gold.

Little Sue is as light as a feather.

These twins are like two peas in a pod.

He left her and now she's as poor as a church mouse.

When it comes to cooking, James is as quick as lightning.

3.



67

Finish the sentences.

- When you are very brave, you are as bold as... (a lion).
You are as bold as a lion.
- When something is fragile it's as brittle as... (glass).
It's as brittle as glass
- A hard-working person is as busy as... (a bee).
A person is as busy as a bee.
- Somebody who changes his moods very often is as changeable as... (the weather).
They are as changeable as the weather.
- If someone remains calm when in danger, he is as cool as... (a cucumber).
He is as cool as a cucumber.
- A deceitful person tends to be as cunning as... (a fox).
A person is as cunning as a fox.
- Sometimes siblings can be as different as... (chalk and cheese).
Siblings can be as different as chalk and cheese.

- I found horse-riding as easy as... (ABC).
Horse-riding is as easy as ABC.
- Somebody who enjoys an excellent physical condition is as fit as... (a fiddle).
He is as fit as a fiddle.
- If you are resolute, you are as firm as... (a rock).
You are as firm as a rock.
- A well-behaved child is as good as... (gold).
A child is as good as gold.
- When a person weighs very little, she's as light as... (a feather).
She is as light as a feather.
- If twins are very much alike, they are like ... (two peas in a pod).
The twins are like two peas in a pod.
- When someone is very poor, he's as poor as... (a church mouse).
He's as poor as a church mouse.
- If someone is very quick, we say he's as quick as ... (lightning).
He is as quick as lightning.

Lesson 18. BINOMINALS

1.



68

Listen.

ODDS AND ENDS	small, unimportant things <i>puntas y cabos, restos</i>
----------------------	--

We have little time now. Let's pack only the most important things and we'll come back to get the odds and ends later.

GIVE AND TAKE	a spirit of compromise <i>toma y daca, concesiones mutuas</i>
----------------------	--

Partners need to give and take. Every relationship must be based on compromise.

PART AND PARCEL	part <i>la parte esencial, la parte integral</i>
------------------------	---

Don't blame yourself! Teenagers have a right to make mistakes. It's just part and parcel of growing up.

TO GO TO RACK AND RUIN	to get ruined decayed <i>echarse a perder, arruinarse</i>
-------------------------------	--

Nobody looks after this house so sooner or later it'll go to rack and ruin.

TO BE PRIM AND PROPER	rather formal and fussy <i>de comportamiento impecable, correcto y formal</i>
------------------------------	--

The atmosphere at work is very formal now as our new boss is so prim and proper.

TO BE ROUGH AND READY	of poor standard <i>provisional, por encima (datos, cifras, etc..)</i>
------------------------------	---

The room we rented was a bit rough and ready but we couldn't afford a better standard.

TO PICK AND CHOOSE	to have a wide choice <i>seleccionar de un abanico grande de posibilidades</i>
---------------------------	---

Our school offers a variety of courses for everyone. You are free to pick and choose.

LEAPS AND BOUNDS	big jumps <i>a pasos agigantados</i>
-------------------------	---

Since she moved to Paris, her French has been progressing in leaps and bounds. She's made huge progress very fast.

PEACE AND QUIET	calm <i>paz y tranquilidad</i>
------------------------	-----------------------------------

When Paul and Mary retired, they moved to the country to find some peace and quiet. They were tired of the noisy city.

HERE AND THERE	scattered round <i>aquí y allá</i>
-----------------------	---------------------------------------

The area was really empty. Only a few huts were scattered here and there across the fields.

ON AND OFF	occasionally <i>de vez en cuando</i>
-------------------	---

Although our families don't meet very often, we call each other on and off just to say what's new.

BACK AND FORTH	to and from somewhere <i>de acá para allá</i>
-----------------------	--

Since my husband got a job in Great Britain, we've been travelling back and forth between London and Warsaw.

DOWN AND OUT	without a home or money <i>derrotado, pobrecito</i>
---------------------	--

When I last saw him he was a down and out with no home, no money and no chances for a job.

UP AND DOWN	in both directions <i>de arriba a abajo</i>
--------------------	--

When she entered the room, she immediately attracted the attention of all the guests. Especially the men eyed her up and down as she looked really gorgeous.

BACK TO FRONT	the wrong way <i>al revés</i>
----------------------	----------------------------------

I was embarrassed to discover right in the middle of the meeting that I had my blouse on back to front. I must have been in a hurry and put it on the wrong way.

2.



69

Listen and repeat.

We'll come back later to pack the odds and ends.

Good partners have to learn how to give and take.

Making mistakes is part and parcel of growing up.

This old house has gone to rack and ruin.

Our new boss is very prim and proper.

The room we rented was rather rough and ready.

They offered a wide selection so we could pick and choose.

My English is progressing in leaps and bounds.

We moved to the country to find peace and quiet.

I saw some huts scattered here and there.

We love each other but we argue on and off.

I have two homes so I travel back and forth.

When he lost his job he was a down and out.

She looked good so all the men eyed her up and down.

I put my blouse on back to front.

3.



70

Listen.

Arguments with parents are **part and parcel** of growing up. Parents need **peace and quiet** and young people want to have fun. **On and off** every teenager has to manifest his or her independence. Peter Jones was no exception. He lived in a village where there were only a few houses scattered **here and there**. There was nothing to do there for a young person so he used to travel **back and forth** to the town which was 20 kilometres away from his village. His parents disapproved of this and finally Peter ran away from home. He moved to his girlfriend's flat which was very **rough and ready** but enough for a start. Peter started to look for a job but as he was 18 and with no education he couldn't **pick and choose**. Soon the couple ran out of money. The flat **went to rack and ruin** and so did their relationship. Peter realised he was a **down and out** and couldn't see any way out of this situation. He was walking **up and down** an empty street one night when he realised that it was time to go back to his village. His parents were very **prim and proper** for a few days but then their hearts melted. Peter had learned his lesson and he understood that in order to finish school he would have to live with his parents and this would be a **give and take** process. Now he was ready to accept it.

4.



71

Paraphrase the sentences using the idiomatic expressions.

- Arguments are an integral part of growing up.
- ...
Arguments are part and parcel of growing up.
- Parents need calm.
- ...
Parents need peace and quiet.
- Occasionally every teenager must rebel.
- ...
On and off every teenager must rebel.
- There were houses scattered around.
- ...
There were houses scattered here and there.
- He used to travel to and from the town.
- ...
He used to travel back and forth.
- The flat was of poor standard.
- ...
The flat was rough and ready.
- He didn't have a wide choice.
- ...
He couldn't pick and choose.
- The flat went into decay.
- ...
The flat went to rack and ruin.
- He was without a home or money.
- ...
He was a down and out.
- He was walking in both directions.
- ...
He was walking up and down.
- His parents were very formal and fussy.
- ...
His parents were very prim and proper.
- They will have to learn to compromise.
- ...
They will have to learn to give and take.

Lesson 19. SHORT IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

1.



72

Listen.

HOW COME?	Why? / How does it happen? / How did it happen? <i>¿Por qué? / ¿Cómo es eso? / ¿Cómo pasó? / ¿Y eso?</i>
------------------	---

- A. I'm afraid I've forgotten to pay the last electricity bill.
- B. How come? How was that possible? Please explain that to me now!

HOW'S THAT?	Why? / What's the reason for it? <i>¿Por qué?</i>
--------------------	--

- A. We can't go to the show tonight.
- B. How's that? What's the reason?
- A. I've lost the tickets.

SO WHAT?	What does it matter? <i>¿Y qué? ¿Qué más da?</i>
-----------------	---

- A. Oh no! I've spilt some ketchup on my shirt.
- B. So what? It is not a problem. Just take it off and wash it in hot water.

WHAT'S UP?	What's the matter? <i>¿Qué pasa? ¿Que hay de nuevo? ¿Qué ocurre?</i>
-------------------	---

- A. Have you heard about Sue's problems?
- B. No, what's up?

WHAT OF IT?	What does it matter? <i>¿Y qué?</i>
--------------------	--

- A. Peter didn't accept our invitation.
- B. What of it? For me it doesn't matter at all. We will have fun without him.

WHAT IF...?	What will happen if...? <i>¿Qué tal si...? / ¿Qué pasa si...?</i>
--------------------	--

- A. Do you have any idea how to solve the problem?

B. What if we ask someone?

COME ON!	used to tell someone to hurry <i>¡VENGA!</i>
-----------------	---

A. Have you seen my glasses? I can't find them anywhere.

B. Come on, we'll miss the train!

COME ON!	used to encourage someone to do something
-----------------	---

A. I'm helpless. I don't know how to do it.

B. Come on, you can do it! Don't give up so easily.

COME ON!	used to tell someone that you know that what they have just said was not true or right
-----------------	--

A. Do you know my girlfriend's got a Porsche?

B. Oh come on, don't lie!

NO WAY! / IN NO WAY!	Certainly not. <i>De ninguna manera, de ningún modo.</i>
-----------------------------	---

A. Will you apologise to her?

B. No way! She is the one to blame.

IT'S TOO BAD! / THAT'S TOO BAD!	It's a pity. <i>¡Qué pena!, ¡Es una lástima!</i>
--	---

A. I'm afraid I won't be able to join you for the weekend.

B. That's too bad. We really wish you could come.

TIME'S UP	There is no more time allowed. <i>Se acabó el tiempo.</i>
------------------	--

A. Can I finish writing the last question?

B. Unfortunately not. Time is up! Please, stop writing now and leave your test on my desk.

TIME FLIES	Time is passing very quickly. <i>El tiempo vuela.</i>
-------------------	--

A. I can't believe it's been seven years since we last met.

B. Oh yes, you're right. Time flies! Those years have passed so fast!

TAKE IT EASY	Be calm. <i>Cálmate, tranquil.</i>
---------------------	---------------------------------------

- A. I'm so worried about the exams.
B. Take it easy! I'm sure everything will be all right.

SO LONG!	a friendly way to say goodbye <i>¡Hasta luego!</i>
-----------------	---

- A. OK, now I really have to go. So long!
B. See you tomorrow then.

GO AHEAD!	Start! Begin! <i>¡Adelante!</i>
------------------	------------------------------------

- A. May I start my presentation now?
B. Go ahead! Everybody's waiting.

NEVER MIND!	Don't worry or be upset about something. <i>No te preocupes. No importa.</i>
--------------------	---

- A. I'm sorry, I've forgotten the money I owe you.
B. Never mind! You can pay me later.

CHEERS!	used when you lift a glass of alcohol in order to express good wishes <i>¡Salud!</i>
----------------	---

- A. Let's drink to our dear host! Cheers!
B. Cheers!

AND SO ON / AND SO FORTH	used to refer to other things of the type you have already mentioned <i>Etcétera / Y así sucesivamente.</i>
---------------------------------	--

- A. So how is it to be a young mother?
B. Well, every day looks the same: nappies, soups and so on.

IT'S NO GOOD	used to say that an action will not achieve what it's intended to achieve <i>Es inútil, no tiene sentido.</i>
---------------------	--

- A. Do you think we can win the race?
B. It's no good trying! We are not fit enough.

GOOD HEAVENS!	used to express surprise <i>¡Santo cielo!</i>
----------------------	--

- A. How do you like my new hairstyle?
B. Good Heavens! What have you done? It looks terrible!

BLESS YOU!	something you say when someone sneezes <i>¡Jesús!</i>
-------------------	--

- A. Atishoo!
B. Bless you!

2.



73

Listen and repeat.

How come you've forgotten to pay the bill?

How is that? What's the reason?

You've spilled some ketchup? So what?

What's up? I haven't heard from you for ages.

What of it? It really doesn't matter.

What if we ask someone?

Come on, hurry up!

Come on, you can do it!

Oh, come on, don't lie!

I will never apologise to her! No way!

It's too bad you can't join us.

Time is up! You must stop writing!

Time flies! It really passes very quickly.

Try to stay calm and just take it easy.

So long! See you later!

You start first so go ahead!

Never mind! You really don't have to worry!

Let's drink to our host! Cheers!

Taking care of a little baby is just soups, nappies and so on.

It's no good trying as we have no chance of winning.

Good heavens! Your hair looks terrible!

Atishoo! – Bless you!

3.



7

Reply to the speaker in the following situations.

- I'm afraid I've forgotten my homework.
- ...
How come?
- We can't do the shopping today.
- ...
How's that?
- Oh, no! I've broken the glass.
- ...
So what?
- Have you heard the latest news?
- ...
No, what's up?
- Peter didn't accept our invitation.
- ...
What of it?
- Do you have any idea how to solve the problem?
- ...
What if we ask someone?
- I can't find the keys anywhere.
- ...
Come on! Hurry up!
- I really don't know how to do it
- ...
Come on! You can do it!
- We've won €1,000, 000.
- ...
Come on! You're joking!
- Will you lend me your car for the weekend?
- ...
No way!
- I'm afraid I can't go with you to the party.
- ...
That's too bad.
- Do we have some more time?
- ...
No, time is up.
- So many years have passed since our first meeting.
- ...
Time flies.
- I'm really worried now.
- ...
Take it easy!
- See you tomorrow then!
- ...
So long!!
- May I start now?
- ...
Go ahead.
- I'm so sorry I've forgotten your book.
- ...
Never mind.
- Cheers!
- ...
Cheers!
- My life is soups, nappies...
- ...
And so on.
- Is there any sense in trying?
- ...
It's no good.
- Mary had a car accident.
- ...
Good Heavens!
- Atishoo!
- ...
Bless you!

Lesson 20. PROVERBS



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.	what people actually do is more important than what they say <i>Obras son amores y no buenas razones.</i>
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.	an event with a good ending is good even if some things went wrong along the way <i>Bien está lo que bien acaba.</i>
ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD.	appearances can be deceptive and things that look or sound valuable can be worthless <i>No es oro todo lo que reluce.</i>
A BAD WORKMAN ALWAYS BLAMES HIS TOOLS.	an unskilled, careless or irresponsible person will not take the responsibility or admit that he has done wrong, but will blame everything on his tools or materials <i>Un mal trabajador siempre culpa sus herramientas.</i>
BARKING DOGS SELDOM BITE.	some people are not as unpleasant or rude as they seem to be when they talk to you <i>Perro ladrador, poco mordedor.</i>
BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.	it's better to do something late than never <i>Más vale tarde que nunca.</i>
A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH.	something you already have is better you might get <i>Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.</i>
DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY HATCH	don't make plans depending on something advantageous which has not yet happened <i>No te adelantes antes que haya terminado.</i>
DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS INTO ONE BASKET.	don't depend completely on the success of one thing <i>No pongas todos los huevos en la misma cesta.</i>
DON'T PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.	don't do or put things in the wrong order <i>Todo a su debido tiempo.</i>
THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE WORM.	a person who gets up or arrives early will get the reward <i>Al que madruga, Dios le ayuda.</i>
HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.	it is always sensible and wise to act honestly <i>La honradez es la mejor política. Hay que ir siempre con la verdad por delante.</i>
IT'S NO USE CRYING OVER SPILT MILK.	it's no use being unhappy or sorry about something which cannot now be changed <i>Lo hecho, hecho está. A lo hecho pecho.</i>

IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS.	problems do not happen one at a time but all together <i>Las penas vienen en cadena. Todo lo malo siempre viene junto.</i>
MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES / STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT.	make the most of good times <i>Aprovecha la oportunidad. Carpe diem.</i>
NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.	our needs make us think of new solutions <i>La necesidad es la madre de los inventos.</i>
NO GAIN WITHOUT PAIN.	wealth cannot be acquired without much effort <i>Quien no arriesga, no gana.</i>
NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS.	if there were bad news we should hear it <i>Ningunas noticias son buenas noticias.</i>
PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.	by constantly practicing, you will become better <i>La práctica hace al maestro.</i>
THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS.	people often make a situation much worse when they intended to make it better <i>Las buenas intenciones no bastan.</i>
ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY.	important things don't happen overnight <i>Zamora no se ganó en un día.</i>
TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH.	too many people trying to manage something simply spoil it <i>Muchas manos en un plato hacen mucho garabato.</i>
YOU CAN'T HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT.	you can't have the advantages of something without the disadvantages that go with it <i>No puedes estar en misa y repicando.</i>