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**First-Year Oral Expression Module**

**Academic Year: 2024-2025**

**Lesson 4**

**Idioms and Phrasal Verbs**

**Bob's Day at Work**

**Bob works as a manager in a furniture store. Peter, his boss, is not happy about sales. Bob's new advertising campaign hasn't helped. Peter decides to fire him.**

**Peter:** Bob, I hate to ***break the news***, but our sales were down again last month.

**Bob:** Down again, Peter?

**Peter:** Yeah. These days, everybody's shopping at our competition, Honest Abe's Furniture Store.

**Bob:** But everything in there ***costs an arm and a leg!***

**Peter:** That's true. They do charge ***top dollar.***

**Bob:** And their salespeople are very strange. They really ***give me the creeps!***

**Peter:** Well, they must be doing something right over there. Meanwhile, we're ***about to*** ***go belly-up.***

**Bob:** I'm sorry to hear that. I thought my new advertising campaign would ***save the day.***

**Peter:** ***Let's face it:*** your advertising campaign was a ***real flop.***

**Bob:** Well then I'll ***go back to the drawing board.***

**Peter:** It's too late for that. You're fired!

**Bob:** What? You're ***giving me the ax***?

**Peter:** Yes. I've already found a new manager. She's as ***sharp as a tack.***

**Bob:** Can't we even ***talk this over?*** ***After all***, I've been working here for 10 years!

**Peter:** There's ***no point in*** arguing, Bob. I've already ***made up my mind.***

**Bob:** Oh well, ***at least*** I won't have to ***put up with*** your nonsense anymore! Good-bye to you and good-bye to this ***dead-end job***.

**Peter:** Please leave before I ***lose my temper!***

**Idioms and Phrasal Verbs**

* **about to**

**→** ready to; on the verge of

Example 1*:* It's a good thing Bob left the furniture store when he did. Peter was so angry, he was **about to** throw a dining room chair at him.

Example 2*:* I'm glad you're finally home. I was just **about to** have dinner without you.

* **after all**

**→** Despite everything; when everything has been considered; the fact is

Example 1: You'd better invite Ed to your party. **After all**, he's a good friend.

Example 2: It doesn't matter what your boss thinks of you. **After all**, you're going to quit your job anyway.

* **at least**

**→** anyway; the good thing is that...

Example 1: We've run out of coffee, but **at least** we still have tea.

Example 2: Tracy can't afford to buy a car, but **at least**she has a good bicycle.

***Note:*** The second definition of this phrase is "no less than": There were at least 300 people waiting in line to buy concert tickets.

* **(to) break the news**

**→** to make something known

Example 1: Samantha and Michael are getting married, but they haven't yet **broken the news** to their parents.

Example 2: You'd better **break the news** to your father carefully. After all, you don't want him to have a heart attack!

* **(to) cost an arm and a leg**

**→** to be very expensive

Example 1: A college education in America **costs an arm and a leg**.

Example 2: All of the furniture at Honest Abe's **costs an arm and a leg**!

* **dead-end job**

**→** a job that won't lead to anything else

Example 1: Diane realized that working as a cashier was a **dead-end job.**

Example 2: Jim worked many **dead-end jobs** before finally deciding to start his own business.

* **(let's) face it**

**→** accept a difficult reality

Example 1: **Let's face it**, if Ted spent more time studying, he wouldn't be failing so many of his classes!

Example 2: **Let's face it**, if you don't have a college degree, it can be difficult to find a high-paying job.

* **(to) give one the creeps**

**→** to create a feeling of disgust or horror

Example 1: Ted's friend Matt has seven earrings in each ear and an "I Love Mom" tattoo on his arm. He really **gives Nicole the creeps**.

Example 2: There was a strange man following me around the grocery store. He was **giving me the creeps**!

* **(to) go back to the drawing board**

**→** to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning

EXAMPLE 1: Frank's new business failed, so he had to **go back to the drawing board**.

EXAMPLE 2: The president didn't agree with our new ideas for the company, so we had to **go back to the drawing board**.

* **(to) go belly-up**

**→** to go bankrupt

EXAMPLE 1: Many people lost their jobs when Enron **went belly-up**.

EXAMPLE 2: My company lost $3 million last year. We might **go belly-up**.

* **(to) give someone the ax**

**→** to fire someone

EXAMPLE 1: Mary used to talk to her friends on the phone all day at work, until one day her boss finally **gave her the ax**.

EXAMPLE 2: Poor Paul! He was **given the ax** two days before Christmas.

* **(to) lose one's temper**

**→** to become very angry

EXAMPLE 1: Bob always **loses his temper** when his kids start talking on the telephone during dinner.

EXAMPLE 2: When Ted handed in his essay two weeks late, his teacher really **lost her temper**.

* **(to) make up one's mind**

**→** to reach a decision; to decide

EXAMPLE 1: Stephanie couldn't **make up her mind** whether to attend Harvard or Stanford. Finally, she chose Stanford.

EXAMPLE 2: Do you want an omelette or fried eggs? You'll need to **make up your mind** quickly because the waitress is coming.

* **no point in**

**→** no reason to; it's not worth (doing something)

EXAMPLE 1: There's **no point in** worrying about things you can't change.

EXAMPLE 2: There's **no point in** going on a picnic if it's going to rain.

* **(to) put up with**

**→** to endure without complaint

EXAMPLE 1: For many years, Barbara **put up with** her husband's annoying behavior. Finally, she decided to leave him.

EXAMPLE 2: I don't know how Len **puts up with** his mean boss every day.

* **real flop or flop**

**→** a failure

EXAMPLE 1: The Broadway play closed after just 4 days - it was a **real flop!**

EXAMPLE 2: The company was in trouble after its new product **flopped**.

* **(to) save the day**

**→** to prevent a disaster or misfortune

EXAMPLE 1: The Christmas tree was on fire, but Ted threw water on it and **saved the day.**

EXAMPLE 2: We forgot to buy champagne for our New Year's party, but Sonia brought some and really **saved the day!**

* **(as) sharp as a tack**

**→** very intelligent

EXAMPLE 1: Jay scored 100% on his science test. He's as **sharp as a tack**.

EXAMPLE 2: Anna got a scholarship to Yale. She's as**sharp as a tack**.

* **(to) talk over**

**→** to discuss

EXAMPLE 1: Dave and I spent hours **talking over** the details of the plan.

EXAMPLE 2: Before you make any big decisions, give me a call and we'll **talk things over**.

* **top dollar**

**→** the highest end of a price range; a lot of money

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole paid **top dollar** for a shirt at Banana Republic.

EXAMPLE 2: Wait until those jeans go on sale. Why pay **top dollar**?

**Practice The Idioms**

**Fill in the blank with the missing word**

1. I can't believe you bought a couch at Honest Abe's. Everything in that store costs an arm and a \_\_\_\_\_.
	* a) foot
	* b) leg
	* c) hand
2. After Bob found out that his advertising campaign failed, he wanted to go back to the drawing \_\_\_\_\_.
	* a) board
	* b) table
	* c) room
3. When somebody isn't listening to you, there's no \_\_\_\_\_ in trying to argue with them.
	* a) edge
	* b) tip
	* c) point
4. Jose is really smart. He's as sharp as a \_\_\_\_\_.
	* a) tack
	* b) nail
	* c) screw
5. The salespeople at Honest Abe's always look angry and never speak to anybody. No wonder they \_\_\_\_\_ Bob the creeps.
	* a) take
	* b) give
	* c) allow
6. Bob got fired. He isn't looking forward to \_\_\_\_\_ the news to his family.
	* a) breaking
	* b) cracking
	* c) saying
7. Bob thought his new advertisements would bring in lots of customers and save the \_\_\_\_\_.
	* a) morning
	* b) night
	* c) day
8. Fortunately, Bob no longer has to put \_\_\_\_\_ with his stupid boss at the furniture store.
	* a) over
	* b) in
	* c) up