

11. Idioms challenge

Exercise 1

Choose the correct answer, **a**, **b** or **c** for each of the questions below.

1. What's the meaning of 'beat about the bush'?
 - a) to talk about something but avoid the point that is most important
 - b) to say you are angry about something but not do anything about it
 - c) to make a lot of people feel afraid of you

2. What's the meaning of 'pass the buck'?
 - a) to be generous with your money
 - b) to avoid taking responsibility for something by saying that someone else is responsible
 - c) to continue doing something for too long

3. What's the meaning of 'take your eye off the ball'?
 - a) to fail to concentrate on something important, and therefore probably make a mistake
 - b) to stop thinking about trivial things and start concentrating on more important things
 - c) to begin to understand more about a situation because you are no longer thinking only about one small part of it

4. What does it mean if you have got a 'raw deal'?
 - a) You have been offered an opportunity that other people don't know about.
 - b) You have been treated unfairly.
 - c) You have been asked to do something for the first time.

5. What's the meaning of 'jump the gun'?
 - a) to escape from a dangerous situation
 - b) to avoid taking risks
 - c) to start doing something too soon, probably without thinking carefully about it

6. What does it mean if someone is 'under the weather'?
 - a) They are feeling ill.
 - b) They have a lot of problems.
 - c) Their mood seems to change when the weather changes.

7. What's the meaning of 'sit on the fence'?
 - a) to make a stupid mistake
 - b) to be very lazy while other people are working
 - c) to try not to support either side in a dispute

8. What does it mean if someone is an 'armchair critic'?
 - a) They are always criticising other people's furniture.
 - b) They criticise what other people do, but never show how they themselves could do those things any better.
 - c) They are always complaining about unimportant things.

9. What's the meaning of 'lose the plot'?
 - a) to stop behaving rationally; to behave foolishly
 - b) to be unable to understand the instructions someone is giving you
 - c) to forget the ending to a story you are telling

10. What does it mean if something isn't 'up to scratch'?
 - a) It's an annoying problem that you can't solve at the moment.
 - b) It isn't going to harm anyone.
 - c) It isn't good enough; it doesn't reach the required standard.

11. How are you feeling if you are 'over the moon' about something?
 - a) nervous
 - b) delighted
 - c) angry

12. What does it mean if 'the ball is in your court'?
 - a) You have to do something, or make a decision, before any progress can be made in a situation.
 - b) You have a great opportunity to be successful.
 - c) You are very good at sport.

13. What does it mean if someone is 'stuffing their face'?
 - a) They are eating a lot.
 - b) They are making a lot of money.
 - c) They are talking a lot.

14. What does it mean if two people 'get on like a house on fire'?
 - a) They dislike each other and usually argue when they are together.
 - b) They have a very good relationship and really enjoy spending time with each other.
 - c) They enjoy being together, but their relationship causes problems for other people.

Exercise 2

Complete the sentences below with the appropriate idioms from Exercise 1. You may need to change the verb forms.

1. 'Sure, we need to start work on the project soon, but let's not _____ . We need to make sure we've got all the information before we begin.'
2. 'I've told them exactly what we want and how much money we'll be able to pay. The _____'s _____ their _____ now.'
3. 'Sharon's absolutely _____ about her promotion, because she's wanted that job for ages and the salary is fantastic.'
4. 'My boss is behaving really strangely, and has made some crazy decisions in the last few days. I think she might be _____.'
5. 'Are you OK? You're looking a bit _____ .'
'I know, I think I might be getting flu.'
6. 'He was doing really well in the company for the first couple of years, but recently he's _____ his _____ . He seems less motivated than he used to be. The work he's doing now simply isn't _____ , and if he doesn't improve we'll have to fire him.'
7. 'Just shut up, will you? The last thing I need is an _____ telling me I'm doing everything wrong while doing absolutely nothing to help.'
8. 'So they expect you to work more hours than Peter, but for less money than he's getting? It seems like they've given you a _____.'
9. 'Come on, stop _____ the _____ . I've been listening to you for five minutes and still don't know what you think about our idea.'
10. 'Whenever we discuss politics it seems Steve always supports the government, Jo always supports the opposition, and Dave is always in the middle, _____ the _____.'
11. 'I thought they wouldn't like each other, but in fact they _____ a _____.'
12. 'Look, it wasn't my fault. Sarah gave me the wrong information.'
'Don't try to _____ . Face the fact that you made a mistake.'
13. 'I'm not surprised you don't want lunch if you've been _____ with chocolate all morning.'