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IDIOMS



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IDIOMS EXERCISES

ENGLISH EXERCISE

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EXERCISE -1

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. The extra money was a big surprise. It came _____.
2. These numbers might win the lottery. _____ for good luck.
3. Donald saved a large _____ to buy a house someday.
4. A flu epidemic hit our office staff and everyone is _____.
5. _____, you can substitute over head transparencies for handouts.

6. The bid on the project was so close that the sales team was _____ until they heard the results.
7. Maria was _____ when she heard about her promotion.
8. Our manager is _____, as he inherited \$500,000 from his father's estate.
9. If we all _____, we can finish by noon.
10. During a recession you have to _____ and watch your budget carefully.

ANSWERS

1. The extra money was a big surprise. It came **out of the blue**.
2. These numbers might win the lottery. **Keep your fingers crossed** for good luck.
3. Donald saved a large **nest egg** to buy a house someday.
4. A flu epidemic hit our office staff and everyone is **under the weather**.
5. **In a pinch**, you can substitute over head transparencies for handouts.
6. The bid on the project was so close that the sales team was **on pins and needles** until they heard the results.
7. Maria was **in seventh heaven** when she heard about her promotion.
8. Our manager is **well-heeled**, as he inherited \$500,000 from his father's estate.
9. If we all **pitch in**, we can finish by noon.
10. During a recession you have to **tighten your belt** and watch your budget carefully.

EXERCISE -2

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. Frank always tries to finish his work before everyone else. He is an _____.
2. We chose the prettiest, best behaved puppy. She was certainly _____.
3. If Madge doesn't _____, she could lose her job.
4. Our new office was very expensive. It cost _____.
5. The IRS audit was extremely thorough. They actually owe us money, which is _____.
6. Don't _____ and pay the bill before it is due.
7. Isabelle finally had to _____ her co-workers' accusations.
8. In today's economy, both husband and wife must _____ in order to meet their financial obligations.
9. When our manager says we have to complete the report by Friday, "or else", I think she _____.
10. Sigmund's donation to charity was _____ compared to what was needed.

ANSWERS:

1. Frank always tries to finish his work before everyone else. He is an **eager beaver**.
2. We chose the prettiest, best behaved puppy. She was certainly **the cream of the crop**.
3. If Madge doesn't **shape up**, she could lose her job.
4. Our new office was very expensive. It cost **an arm and a leg**.
5. The IRS audit was extremely thorough. They actually owe us money, which is **one for the books**.
6. Don't **jump the gun** and pay the bill before it is due.
7. Isabelle finally had to **face up to** her co-workers' accusations.
8. In today's economy, both husband and wife must **bring home the bacon** in order to meet their financial obligations.
9. When our manager says we have to complete the report by Friday, "or else", I think she **means business**.
10. Sigmund's donation to charity was **a drop in the bucket** compared to what was needed.

EXERCISE -3

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. The workers voted to go on strike because they felt they had not been given _____ by the management.
2. Mrs. Brown is just _____ with whom we exchange civilities and nothing more.
3. It is important that _____ truly understands the government's new economic policies.
4. Do not get sidetracked by any _____ when interviewing the job applicants.
5. As a war correspondent, he was sent to _____ to gain first-hand coverage.
6. The company refuses to employ Nelson because he does not have _____ in selling such products.
7. A salesman with _____ is likely to be a successful one.
8. She went all out and was just within _____ of winning the race.
9. Four months ago the company was already on the brink of collapse, but unfortunately the management did not see _____.
10. Sam was depressed after he was retrenched, but when his wife left him, it was _____.

ANSWERS :

1. The workers voted to go on strike because they felt they had not been given **a square deal** by the management.
2. Mrs. Brown is just **a nodding acquaintance** with whom we exchange civilities and nothing more.
3. It is important that **the man in the street** truly understands the government's new economic policies.
4. Do not get sidetracked by any **red herring** when interviewing the job applicants.
5. As a war correspondent, he was sent to **a hot spot** to gain first-hand coverage.
6. The company refuses to employ Nelson because he does not have **a track record** in selling such products.
7. A salesman with **the gift of the gab** is likely to be a successful one.
8. She went all out and was just within **a hair's breadth** of winning the race.
9. Four months ago the company was already on the brink of collapse, but unfortunately the management did not see **the writing on the wall**.
10. Sam was depressed after he was retrenched, but when his wife left him, it was **the last straw**.

EXERCISE -4

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom

1. The matter is serious and will affect many people; the government cannot just _____.
2. The supervisor had been warned not to _____ any of the female workers or he would be summarily dismissed.
3. As the project involves a lot of money, you have to consider very carefully and not simply _____.
4. It will be gross injustice if he is _____ just because his father is a big shot.
5. Practically all the ministers in the corrupt government were _____ at the expense of the poor.
6. The kidnappers _____ for a few days before feeing the country with the ransom.
7. I doubt I can ever fully repay my benefactor whose generosity to me _____.
8. The two opposing political parties are focusing their attention on those voters who have the penchant for _____.

9. When James asked me to take over the job, he was obviously trying to _____.
10. Many of the workers did not agree with the company's new policy, but they did not want to _____ and go on strike.

ANSWERS

1. The matter is serious and will affect many people; the government cannot just **sweep it under the carpet**.
2. The supervisor had been warned not to **lay a finger on** any of the female workers or he would be summarily dismissed.
3. As the project involves a lot of money, you have to consider very carefully and not simply **throw caution to the winds**.
4. It will be gross injustice if he is **let off the hook** just because his father is a big shot.
5. Practically all the ministers in the corrupt government were **lining their pockets** at the expense of the poor.
6. The kidnappers **lay low** for a few days before feeing the country with the ransom.
7. I doubt I can ever fully repay my benefactor whose generosity to me **knows no bounds**.
8. The two opposing political parties are focusing their attention on those voters who have the penchant for **sitting on the fence**.
9. When James asked me to take over the job, he was obviously trying to **pass the buck**.
10. Many of the workers did not agree with the company's new policy, but they did not want to **rock the boat** and go on strike.

EXERCISE -5

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. After working in a big company for some years, he decided that he had had enough of _____ and retired to enjoy a more peaceful life.
2. You can try to get him to change his mind, but you'll find him _____.
3. The former leader of the party is keeping _____ so that attention can be fully focused on the current leader.
4. Whether these controls will really reduce violent crime is _____.
5. Let's finish discussing the theoretical aspects and get on with _____.
6. It really _____ for her to punish the recalcitrant student, but she had no choice.
7. When the management _____ the intended strike, they sacked the ringleader.
8. When their enemy suddenly held out an olive branch, they immediately _____.
9. _____ is counter-productive; let's get back to the main issue.
10. They _____ by starting to operate their business before official permission had been granted.

ANSWERS:

1. After working in a big company for some years, he decided that he had had enough of **the rat race** and retired to enjoy a more peaceful life.
2. You can try to get him to change his mind, but you'll find him **a hard nut to crack**.
3. The former leader of the party is keeping **a low profile** so that attention can be fully focused on the current leader.
4. Whether these controls will really reduce violent crime is **a moot point**.
5. Let's finish discussing the theoretical aspects and get on with **the nuts and bolts**.
6. It really **went against the grain** for her to punish the recalcitrant student, but she had no choice.
7. When the management **got wind of** the intended strike, they sacked the ringleader.
8. When their enemy suddenly held out an olive branch, they immediately **smelled a rat**.
9. **Splitting hairs** is counter-productive; let's get back to the main issue.
10. They **jumped the gun** by starting to operate their business before official permission had been granted.

EXERCISE -6

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. If the company loses the contract, hundreds of jobs will be _____.
2. Despite its present difficulties, the company's prospects look good _____.
3. The two neighbors are _____ each other and are not on talking terms.
4. Although Molly is already in her fifties, she still insists that she is not _____ yet.
5. The company's financial position has improved slightly since last year's recession, but it is still not _____ yet.
6. She has accepted the overseas posting _____. I hope she will not regret her decision.
7. Mr. Cunningham was _____ about working overseas and leaving his family behind.
8. The shy man is often _____ when he is in the company of his female colleagues.
9. _____ the falling birth rate, the government has decided to adopt more pro-family policies and provide incentives.
10. After a lull of six months, the terrorists were back in the country _____.
11. Some workers insisted that they should be paid more _____ their seniority.
12. That Katty managed to escape death _____ in the crash was almost a miracle.
13. When Maria married Peter, she was prepared to stay with him _____.
14. You will be _____ a more experienced player in the final game, but it is not impossible to beat him.
15. Gonzales went into the lead _____ and eventually won the race in record time.

ANSWERS:

1. If the company loses the contract, hundreds of jobs will be **at stake**.
2. Despite its present difficulties, the company's prospects look good **in the long term**.
3. The two neighbors are **at odds with** each other and are not on talking terms.
4. Although Molly is already in her fifties, she still insists that she is not **over the hill** yet.
5. The company's financial position has improved slightly since last year's recession, but it is still not **out of the woods** yet.
6. She has accepted the overseas posting **on the spur of the moment**. I hope she will not regret her decision.
7. Mr. Cunningham was **in two minds** about working overseas and leaving his family behind.
8. The shy man is often **at a loss for words** when he is in the company of his female colleagues.
9. **In view of** the falling birth rate, the government has decided to adopt more pro-family policies and provide incentives.
10. After a lull of six months, the terrorists were back in the country **with a vengeance**.
11. Some workers insisted that they should be paid more **by virtue of** their seniority.
12. That Katty managed to escape death **by a whisker** in the crash was almost a miracle.
13. When Maria married Peter, she was prepared to stay with him **through thick and thin**.
14. You will be **up against** a more experienced player in the final game, but it is not impossible to beat him.
15. Gonzales went into the lead **from the word go** and eventually won the race in record time.

EXERCISE -7

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

1. The grandchildren were amused that their grandparents _____ holding hands in public.
2. The manager told Alex to stop _____ and come to the point.
3. It is _____ to hear that someone has lost his car when yours has just been stolen.
4. The thieves _____ for a few days before escaping to another country with the money.
5. Both political parties were no good and the people would just have to decide to vote for _____.
6. Many people just _____ the ideals of love and the brotherhood of man and in fact lead totally selfish lives.
7. The patriarch found it hard to _____ with the young people cracking jokes around him.
8. Although the herbal medicine works slowly, _____ the patient will get better.

9. Julian and his sister had _____ when they found out that their father had been made a bankrupt.

10. Alice was confident that she would pass the test with flying colors as she had the subject _____.

ANSWERS:

1. The grandchildren were amused that their grandparents **fought shy of** holding hands in public.
2. The manager told Alex to stop **beating about the bush** and come to the point.
3. It is **cold comfort** to hear that someone has lost his car when yours has just been stolen.
4. The thieves **lay low** for a few days before escaping to another country with the money.
5. Both political parties were no good and the people would just have to decide to vote for **the lesser of two evils**.
6. Many people just **pay lip service to** the ideals of love and the brotherhood of man and in fact lead totally selfish lives.
7. The patriarch found it hard to **keep a straight face** with the young people cracking jokes around him.
8. Although the herbal medicine works slowly, **in the long run** the patient will get better.
9. Julian and his sister had **a rude awakening** when they found out that their father had been made a bankrupt.
10. Alice was confident that she would pass the test with flying colors as she had the subject **at her fingertips**.

EXERCISE -8

Rewrite each of the following, using a suitable prepositional idiom in place of the words in bold print.

We **eagerly accepted** his offer of a lift to town.

We **jumped at** his offer of a lift to town.

1. He **assumed** an air of indifference when we laughed at him.
2. She has to **endure** her employer's ill temper every morning.
3. He **expressed himself freely** before the assembly.
4. The robber **escaped** with all the jewelry in the house.
5. The meeting has been **postponed** to the 8th of July.
6. Don't you think that the concert **was a success** ?
7. The two friends have **quarreled** and are not on speaking terms now.
8. The scouts were **exhausted** after their climb up the mountain.
9. The naughty boys were **confined** after school.
10. The governor's wife **distributed** the presents to the orphans.
11. The president of the society **excluded** a few items from the agenda.
12. The maid **concocted** a story to explain why the dish was burnt.
13. She **resembles** her mother in both appearance and character.
14. The supervisor usually **overlooks** the mistakes made by the workers.
15. The beggar **proved** to be a detective in disguise.
16. We are determined to **support** you though you may be in disgrace right now.
17. At the fair he **chanced to meet** an old friend.
18. I can never **decipher** her writing.
19. The police inspector decided to **investigate** the case himself.
20. The spendthrift did not think of **saving** a part of his salary **for future needs**.

ANSWERS :

1. He **put on** an air of indifference when we laughed at him.
2. She has to **put up with** her employer's ill temper every morning.
3. He **spoke out** before the assembly.
4. The robber **made off** with all the jewelry in the house.
5. The meeting has been **put off** to the 8th of July.
6. Don't you think that the concert **sell out** ?
7. The two friends have **fallen out** and are not on speaking terms now.
8. The scouts were **done in** after their climb up the mountain.
9. The naughty boys were **kept in** after school.
10. The governor's wife **gave away** the presents to the orphans.
11. The president of the society **ruled out** a few items from the agenda.
12. The maid **made up** a story to explain why the dish was burnt.
13. She **takes after** her mother in both appearance and character.
14. The supervisor usually **passes over** the mistakes made by the workers.
15. The beggar **turned out** to be a detective in disguise.
16. We are determined to **stand by** you though you may be in disgrace right now.
17. At the fair he **came across** an old friend.
18. I can never **make out** her writing.
19. The police inspector decided to **look into** the case himself.
20. The spendthrift did not think of **laying by** a part of his salary.

