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WITH A  
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# English for Social Interaction

# EVERYDAY IDIOMS

Betty Kirkpatrick MA

- Thirty realistic and lively passages dealing with everyday situations
- Each passage containing expressions frequently found in everyday conversation
- Clear explanations of useful expressions, lots of example sentences and Language Help notes
- Exercises for self-testing with answer key

English for  
Social Interaction

# EVERYDAY IDIOMS

Betty Kirkpatrick MA



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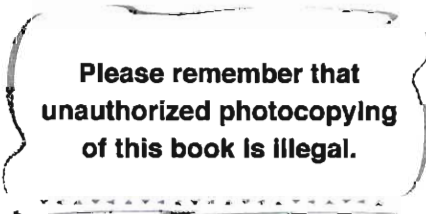
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# Introduction

Learning to communicate in written, and more formal, English is much easier than learning to communicate in spoken, or informal English. Apart from anything else, it is sometimes difficult to find teaching material that is based on up-to-date, colloquial English. Also, less formal English is more subject to change than the formal language of written texts. Colloquial English, being the language of everyday conversation, is subject to fashion and, accordingly, is less static.

The difficulties involved in becoming familiar with less formal English must obviously be overcome if learners are to become fluent in English. Such fluency is the ultimate goal of learning a language.

This book is intended to assist the learner to become more familiar with the expressions used in everyday communication, and so help them achieve the goal of fluency. It presents a series of 30 specially written passages which are based on the kind of realistic conversations which might take place in everyday life. The passages are modern, interesting and lively. Passages can, of course, convey the style and language of conversations much more vividly than individual example sentences can.

The passages contain the kind of informal, sometimes idiomatic or slang, expressions associated with such conversations. These expressions are printed in bold type in order to bring them to the attention of the learner.

Immediately following each passage is an explanation section. This section defines or explains each of the expressions given in bold type in the passage. It also gives two example sentences, printed in italic type, to give students more usage guidance. Where relevant, further language help has been given. This additional help might, for example, take the form of another expression which is used in a similar way.

A set of exercises, with accompanying answers, has also been included in the book so that students can test their comprehension of the key expressions and their explanations.

## 1

# The day out that never happened

*It was a holiday weekend and the Brown family were planning a day out. Over breakfast they discussed where to go.*

'Basically, we have to think of somewhere that we'll all enjoy,' said Mr Brown as everyone made suggestions.

'Easier said than done,' replied Mrs Brown. 'We all enjoy different things. What will suit the younger children might not suit the older ones, not to mention the grandparents.'

'Well, don't let's waste the day thinking about it,' said Mr Brown. 'Let's see. What about a visit to the zoo? It's a long time since we've all been there.'

'You're wrong there, Dad. As a matter of fact I was there just last week,' said Jane, the Browns' youngest daughter. 'We went on a school outing. I don't want to go again so soon.'

'In all honesty, I'm not very keen on zoos,' said Mrs Lane, Mrs Brown's mother. 'I know that the animals are well looked after, but I can't bear to think of wild creatures being locked up.'

'I agree with Gran,' said Anne, the Browns' middle daughter. 'It's horrible to think of animals being shut up. In any case, the zoo will be horribly crowded today. It's a lovely day and I dread to think how many people will have decided to spend the day there.'

'OK, so that's the zoo out,' replied Mr Brown. 'Any other ideas? Where would you like to go, Mark?' he asked his elder son.

'I'm easy!' said Mark, 'but I have to be back by 5 o'clock at the latest. I'm going to a barbecue at Jack's house.'

'I'll have to be back early, too,' said Mary, the Browns' elder daughter. 'I promised to go to the cinema with Sara.'

'For goodness sake!' said Mr Brown. 'There's no point in going anywhere if we have to be back that early. I think we should forget the day out and you can all do what you want. I'm going to read the paper in the back garden.'

## Useful Expressions

### basically

You use **basically** when you are referring to the main or most important point or feature of a situation:

- 'Why did Anne decide not to marry Jim?'  
'**Basically**, because she fell out of love with him.'
- **Basically**, Jim has recovered well from the accident, although he still has a slight limp.

#### Language Help

**Basically** is often used almost meaninglessly as an introduction to what you are going to say:

- **Basically**, we have no holiday plans as yet.

### case in any case

You use **in any case** when you want to say that a fact or situation remains the same whatever happens or has happened:

- The flight may be delayed, but we've to check in at the usual time **in any case**.
- I'll give you a lift to the city, if you want. I'm going there today **in any case**.

### dread I dread to think

You say **I dread to think** to emphasize how bad you think a situation is or might be:

- **I dread to think** what would happen if there was a fire in this building. The fire doors are all locked.

- **I dread to think** what my father will say when he hears that I crashed his car.

#### Language Help

You can use **I hate to think** in the same way:

- **I hate to think** how much money Mary owes the bank.
- **I hate to think** he will do better than me when I study a lot harder.

### easier easier said than done

You say **easier said than done** when you think that what has been suggested is very difficult:

- 'Try not to worry about your daughter.'  
'That's **easier said than done**. She's over three hours late and she always phones if she's going to be late.'
- 'We'd like you to book two single rooms at a local hotel for us.'  
'**Easier said than done!** It's the middle of the tourist season and accommodation's in very short supply.'

### easy I'm easy

You say **I'm easy** in an informal context when you are offered a choice of things and you do not mind which choice is carried out:

- 'Would you rather go to the theatre than the cinema?'  
'**I'm easy!** You choose.'
- 'Would you like tea or coffee?'  
'**I'm easy!** I'll have what you're having.'

## fact

### as a matter of fact

You use **as a matter of fact** when you are saying what the truth about a situation is, this often being the opposite of what has just been mentioned or suggested:

- 'Your hotel was in the middle of town and so I suppose it was rather noisy.'  
'No, **as a matter of fact** it was very quiet. They have good double glazing and we had rooms at the back.'
- 'I suppose your daughter will have left home by now.'  
'No, **as a matter of fact** she's still at home. She's studying at the local university.'

#### Language Help

You can also use **as a matter of fact** when you wish to add a piece of information, often something which you think is interesting or surprising, to what you have just said:

- *I've decided to accept the job offer. **As a matter of fact** I start on Monday.*

## goodness

### for goodness' sake

You use **for goodness' sake** when you are very surprised, shocked or annoyed by something:

- **For goodness' sake**, Jane. You can't go to a formal party wearing those jeans.
- **For goodness' sake**, hurry up. We'll miss the plane if we don't leave now.

## honesty

### in all honesty

You say **in all honesty** to emphasize that what you are going to say is completely true:

- Jack studies hard, but, **in all honesty**, he's not a good enough student to get into university.
- You can certainly apply for the job, but, **in all honesty**, I don't think you'll get it.

## mention

### not to mention

You say **not to mention** when you wish to add a piece of information to emphasize what you are saying:

- Jim has a lot of property. He owns three flats in London, **not to mention** a house in the south of France and one in Scotland.
- Why are you buying more clothes? You have a wardrobe full of them, **not to mention** the ones in the attic.

## see

### let's see

You say **let's see** when you are thinking about something or trying to remember something:

- You say that you're looking for accommodation for the night. **Let's see.** You could try the George Hotel on the High Street.
- 'Can you recommend a good local restaurant that's not too expensive?' **'Let's see.** There are two or three, but I think Shrimps by the harbour is the best—if you like fish.'

#### Language Help

You can also use **let me see** in the same way:

- **Let me see.** Where did I put my purse?



## Exercise 1

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *For* \_\_\_\_\_ *sake*, turn the television off—I'm trying to study.
- 2 Jack wasn't rude to me. *As a* \_\_\_\_\_ *of fact* he was extremely polite.
- 3 My boss asked me to get an emergency plumber to fix the leak in the pipes but that's \_\_\_\_\_ *said than done*. All the ones I've tried are busy.

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 Workers have many complaints about the company—poor working conditions, bad management, \_\_\_\_\_ low wages.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_, Tom is not qualified to do the job, although he tries very hard.
- 3 'Would you prefer red or white wine?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_'. I like both.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *Whatever happens*, I need to be home by tomorrow.
- 2 Tom can be charming, but, *to be honest*, I don't really like him.
- 3 *I hate to think* how late we're going to be when the traffic's so heavy.
- 4 *Let me see*. The quickest way for you to get to Bill's house is by going through the park.

## 2

## Money worries

*Jack had decided that he wanted to spend a year travelling around the world after he had finished school. He was fairly certain that he would do well enough in his final exams to get into university, but he was going to take a year off first. There was, however, a major problem. He had very little money.*

'Hi, Jack! **How's it going?**' asked Bob when he and Jim met Jack on the way to school. 'Did you get much studying done at the weekend?'

'It's not my schoolwork that's worrying me,' replied Jack. 'It's how to get enough money to go abroad after the exams.'

'You'll need a lot of money to do that,' said Bob. 'I always seem to spend an incredible amount of money whenever I travel.'

'**Tell me about it!**' replied Jack, 'and at the moment I've only got about \$600—**give or take a few dollars.**'

'**You could always** get a part-time job between now and the exams,' suggested Jim. 'You sound as though you're quite well ahead with your studying.'

'**Fat chance!**' replied Jack. 'I'm sure I could easily get a job, but **I hate to think** what my parents would say about it. They're not very happy about my taking a year off before university, but they would be furious if I suggested taking a part-time job to pay for it.'

'**You never know.** Perhaps they'll be so pleased if you do well in your exams that they'll lend you the money,' suggested Jim.

'**Not on your life!**' replied Jack. 'My father never changes his mind about anything.'

'So what are you going to do?' asked Bob. 'There's not much time left.'

'**I haven't the foggiest!**' said Jack. 'What I do know is that I will be on a plane as soon as the exams are over!'

## Useful Expressions

### always

#### you could always

You say **you could always** when you are suggesting to someone what they might do:

- *If you need a place to stay tonight **you could always** have our spare room.*
- *If you're looking for a job **you could always** try the local factory. I heard they were looking for people.*

### chance

#### fat chance!

You use **fat chance!** in an informal context when you think that there is no likelihood or possibility of something happening:

- *'Do you think that the boss would let us leave early to watch the football match?'*  
*'Fat chance!'*
- *'I wonder if Mum and Dad would let us have a party while they're away.'*  
*'Fat chance!'*

### foggiest

#### I haven't the foggiest

You use **I haven't the foggiest** in an informal context to emphasize that you do not know the answer to something:

- *'How often do the trains run to the city?'*  
*'I haven't the foggiest! I always go by car.'*
- *I haven't the foggiest where Jack's working now.*

### Language Help

The expression is a shortened form of **I haven't the foggiest idea**, which you can use in the same way.

### Language Help

The informal expression **I haven't the faintest** is used in the same way.

### give

#### give or take

You use **give or take** to show that the number you mention is not exact but is approximately correct:

- *Mark's been with the firm ten years, **give or take** a couple of months.*
- *It's 300 kilometres to the city, **give or take** a kilometre or two.*

### go

#### how's it going?

You say **how's it going?** in an informal context when you ask someone how they are and how they are getting on:

- *Hi, Jack. **How's it going?** I haven't seen you for ages.*
- *I hear you're studying French at university. **How's it going?***

### Language Help

A more formal way of saying this is **how are you?** or **how are you getting on?**

## hate

### I hate to think

You say **I hate to think** to emphasize how bad you think a situation is or might be:

- **I hate to think** what might have happened if the policeman hadn't stopped the drunk driver.
- **I hate to think** how noisy the children's party will be.

#### Language Help

You use **I dread to think** in the same way:

- **I dread to think** how badly I've done in that exam.

## know

### you never know

You say **you never know** when you mean that it is possible that something might happen although it seems very unlikely:

- **You never know.** They might offer you the job even though some of the rest of the candidates are better qualified.
- The hotel's fully booked for the whole of August, but **you never know.** There may be some cancellations.

## life

### not on your life!

You use **not on your life!** to emphasize that you are definitely not going to do something:

- 'Are you going to work this weekend?'  
**'Not on your life!** I'm going to spend the day at the beach.'
- 'Would you like to help with the garden?'  
**'Not on your life!** I hate gardening.'

## tell

### tell me about it!

You use **tell me about it!** in an informal context to emphasize that you agree with someone, often because you have had a similar experience to the one they have mentioned:

- 'It takes so much work to keep a garden of this size tidy.'  
**'Tell me about it!** I'm having to pay someone to look after mine and I can't really afford it.'
- 'Rents in this town seem very high!'  
**'Tell me about it!** Most of my salary goes on rent.'

## Exercise 2

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 I hear you're training to be an accountant. *How are you getting on?*
- 2 'Where has Fred gone?'  
*'I really don't know. I didn't know he'd gone.'*
- 3 'Do you think you've passed the exam?'  
*'Not likely! I couldn't answer half the questions.'*

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'Are you going to Jack's party?'  
*'Not on your \_\_\_\_\_! Jack's parties are always boring.'*
- 2 We made \$1000 at the village fete, \_\_\_\_\_ *or take* a few dollars.
- 3 If you can't get a flight this morning *you could* \_\_\_\_\_ go by train.

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'Every time I come on this train it's late.'  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ I have to come by it every day and I'm always late for work.'*
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ . You might win the lottery.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ what could have happened to the child if the police hadn't found her.

**D** Write down an expression which is a more formal way of saying **how's it going?** Use the expression in a sentence.

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## 3

## An unexpected holiday

*Lucy has some exciting news for her friend Jill in Toronto, Canada.*

Dear Jill

You'll never guess what's happened: I've won the lottery! Well, I didn't win the first prize, but I won enough to treat myself to a holiday. Talk about surprised! I nearly fainted when I heard the news!

I've been a bit depressed and I've decided to take a holiday. There's nothing to touch a holiday to cheer people up. I thought I might come and see you in Toronto and perhaps stay with you for a couple of days. I'm hoping to come for a month, but most of the time I'd stay with my mother's sister who lives just outside Toronto.

Believe it or not, my boss has agreed to let me take a month off work, although I've not anywhere near that much holiday left to take this year. Of course, the extra time off is without pay, but I'm surprised he didn't refuse to give me it. Wonders will never cease!

I'm hoping to come next month when I can still get a cheap flight. After that it's peak season, and the fares are much more expensive. I wonder if you could perhaps get a few days' holiday to act as my tourist guide. What about it? Please don't worry if that's not possible. We can always meet up in the evenings and leave my aunt to show me the sights.

Heaven knows when I'll ever have enough money again to come over and so I hope my visit comes at a good time for you. If it doesn't, please feel free to say so. I know that you're often very busy at work. Let me know as soon as you can.

My mother has just had what she thought was a brilliant idea. She suggested I take my younger brother, Paul, with me! Fortunately, I managed to convince her this was just not possible. Fancy having to look after a teenage boy in a strange city!

I hope to hear from you—and see you—soon.

Love  
*Lucy*

\* Informal letters are written in the style of spoken English.

## Useful Expressions

### anywhere

#### not anywhere near

You say **not anywhere near** when you want to emphasize that something is much less than something:

- I've **not done anywhere near** enough work to pass the exam.
- We haven't **anywhere near** the money it takes to rent a flat there.

### believe

#### believe it or not

You say **believe it or not** when you are referring to something that is true but surprising or unlikely:

- **Believe it or not**, it didn't rain all the time we were in London.
- **Believe it or not**, we found a cheap and comfortable place to stay right in the city centre.

### fancy

You use **fancy!** in this way when you are surprised or shocked by something:

- **Fancy** the boss giving an extra day's holiday at Christmas! He's usually so mean!
- **Fancy!** My new boyfriend's parents have just moved in next door to my uncle and aunt.

### free

#### feel free

You say **feel free** to someone to tell them that they are allowed to do something:

- Please **feel free** to check your emails on my computer.
- **Feel free** to borrow any books you want from the college library.

### guess

#### you'll never guess!

You use **you'll never guess!** when you are going to tell someone something surprising or exciting:

- **You'll never guess** what the boss wanted to talk to me about! He wants me to be the office manager!
- **You'll never guess** who was at the charity reception last night! Prince William!

### Language Help

You use **guess what?** in a similar way:

- **Guess what?** I've just got a big pay rise!
- **I didn't win the first prize but guess what?** I was commended highly for good citizenship!

### know

#### heaven knows

You say **heaven knows** when you want to emphasize that you do not know something:

- 'Why has Anne changed her mind about marrying Jack?'  
'**Heaven knows!** She hasn't even given Jack a reason.'
- **Heaven knows** why Jim and Lucy bought a dog. The poor animal's in the house on its own all day.

### Language Help

You can also use **goodness knows** in the same way:

- **Goodness knows** where I put my purse. I can't find it anywhere.
- **Goodness knows** what she's up to. She hasn't said a word to anyone the whole day.

### talk

#### talk about ...!

You say **talk about ...!** when you want to emphasize something:

- **Talk about rich!** James is one of the wealthiest men in New York.
- **Talk about stupid!** My new assistant can't get anything right.

### touch

#### there's nothing to touch

You say **there's nothing to touch** something when you mean that it is the best, the most enjoyable, etc:

- **There's nothing to touch** my mum's cooking.
- **There's nothing to touch** a glass of chilled white wine on a really hot day.

### what

#### what about it?

You say **what about it?** in an informal context when you make a suggestion to someone and you are asking if they agree to it:

- *We'd like to offer you the job of manager.* **What about it?**
- *I'll give you \$10,000 for your car.* **What about it?**

### wonder

#### wonders will never cease!

You say **wonders will never cease!** to express surprise:

- **Wonders will never cease!** *There were no delays at the airport.*
- **Wonders will never cease!** *We're getting quite a large pay rise this year.*



### Exercise 3

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ to take some roses from my garden while I'm on holiday.
- 2 I hear that you're looking for somewhere to stay and we have a room to rent in the flat. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ where I'm going to find the money to pay off my bank loan. My business is doing badly.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ *will never cease!* My brother has tidied his bedroom.
- 2 *There's* \_\_\_\_\_ *to touch* John as a driving instructor. He's brilliant!
- 3 You have *not* \_\_\_\_\_ *near* enough experience to get this job.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ *about* mean! Jim bought one bottle of wine for ten of us!
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ *it or not*, I got the job!

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *Goodness knows* where I'm going to find somewhere to live.
- 2 *Guess what?* I've won a free holiday in a magazine competition.

## 4

## Just a rumour

*Some office colleagues of Mark's were talking about him and wondering if he was about to be made redundant.*

'If you ask me, there's something wrong with Mark,' remarked Liz. 'He seems very depressed and he's usually so cheerful.'

'Come to think of it, he's not been looking very happy for some time,' said Carol. 'Do you think he could be ill?'

'I don't think he's physically ill, but he could be suffering from stress,' replied Liz. 'He's been working very hard recently and staying in the office until very late. He must be very tired.'

'The boss asked to see him yesterday but Mark told me it was **no big deal**, that he just wanted to ask him something,' said Joe. 'Do you think that's likely?'

'No way!' replied Carol. 'It sounds serious. The boss never usually sends for people unless he wants to make a complaint about them or sack them.'

'Funny you should say that, because I've just heard a rumour that there are likely to be some redundancies in the firm,' said Peter, 'but I wouldn't have thought that they'd want to get rid of Mark. He's one of our best workers.'

'Don't bank on it,' replied Joe. 'It's often difficult to see why they keep some people and get rid of others when redundancies are called for. Sometimes they want to lose the highly paid workers and save money.'

'Too true!' said Liz. 'That happened to a friend of mine when he was too old to get another job and too young to retire. It was really sad.'

'Talk of the devil!' said Carol. 'Here's Mark coming now. Start talking about something else, quickly!'

Liz ignored the suggestion and rather tactlessly asked Mark if he had heard anything about redundancies.

'No, **that's news to me**,' said Mark, 'and the boss didn't mention it yesterday when he asked me to work overtime again this month. It's probably just a rumour. They're **not exactly** uncommon around here, are they?'

## Useful Expressions

### ask

#### if you ask me

You say **if you ask me** when you are giving your personal opinion about something:

- *If you ask me, the drunk driver should have gone to prison.*
- *If you ask me, the class sizes in the school are much too big.*

### bank

#### don't bank on it

You say **don't bank on it** when you are advising someone not to depend or rely on something happening:

- *'According to the weather forecast it's going to be a fine day for our picnic tomorrow.'*  
*'Don't bank on it! The weather forecasters often get things wrong.'*
- *Jim said that he'd help us move house, but don't bank on it. He's not very reliable.*

### deal

#### no big deal

You use **no big deal** when you mean that something is not at all important:

- *Many people considered that John was a hero for rescuing the boy from the fire, but he said modestly that it was **no big deal**.*
- *Bob said it was **no big deal** when he borrowed the firm's van for his personal business, but the boss was furious when he found out.*

### devil

#### talk of the devil!

You say **talk of the devil!** when you suddenly see someone whom you have just been talking about:

- *Talk of the devil! We were just saying that we hadn't seen you for a long time.*
- *Talk of the devil! I had just remarked that I don't see many of my old student friends these days when two of them came into the pub.*

### exactly

#### not exactly

You use **not exactly** to mean that something is not all true:

- *The neighbours are **not exactly** friendly. They all ignore us.*
- *Property is **not exactly** cheap in this area. I'm amazed that Lucy was able to afford a flat here.*

### Language Help

You can also use **not exactly** in reply to something which is not completely true:

- *'Was Jack happy to be transferred to the London office?'*  
*'Not exactly, but he didn't complain because he thought the transfer would lead to promotion.'*

### funny

#### funny you should say that

You use **funny you should say that** as a comment on a coincidence when someone

has said something that is strangely or unexpectedly closely connected with something else that has been said:

- *'This area needs a good cheap restaurant.'*  
**'Funny you should say that!** A friend of mine is planning to open one in a month or two.'
- *'Frank really should think of marrying again. It's a long time since his wife died and he's very lonely.'*  
**'Funny you should say that!** He's just told me that he's joined a dating agency.'

### news

#### that's news to me

You say **that's news to me** when you have just been told something that you did not know about, often something that you feel you should have known about earlier:

- *'Bill and Jane were never married.'*  
**'That's news to me.** He always referred to her as his wife.'
- *'Apparently they're building a huge new office block near the public park.'*  
**'That's news to me** and I live in that area.'

### think

#### come to think of it

You say **come to think of it** when you have just thought of or remembered something:

- *Jane wasn't at tonight's meeting. **Come to think of it,** she wasn't there last week either.*

- *The doctor says that Bob has heart disease. **Come to think of it,** his father had something wrong with his heart.*

### true

#### too true!

You say **too true!** when you wish to emphasize how true a statement is or how much you agree with it:

- *'So you think that the hotel porter could be the thief.'*  
**'Too true!** We've just discovered that he was sacked from his last job for theft.'
- *'I think we all deserve a day off.'*  
**'Too true!** We've been working overtime for weeks now.'

### way

#### no way

You use **no way** to emphasize that you are not going to do something or that something is not likely to happen:

- *'Are you going to accept the job?'*  
**'No way!** It's very badly paid.'
- *'Do you think that Bob will come on holiday with us?'*  
**'No way!** He never has any money!'
- *There is **no way** that Jim would give Pete a job. He really dislikes him.*

## Exercise 4

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *Talk of the \_\_\_\_\_!* I had just mentioned that Anne was coming home from her overseas job when I saw her coming towards me.
- 2 Apparently Sue has been sacked. \_\_\_\_\_ *to think of it*, she looked a bit miserable when she left the office today.
- 3 'I think there's money missing from my purse.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ *you should say that!* I was sure that I had a fifty dollar note in my handbag and it's not there.'
- 4 *If you \_\_\_\_\_ me*, children watch far too much television these days.

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'Was Fred found guilty of fraud?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ And he was sent to prison for three years.'
- 2 'Do you think your brother would lend you the money?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_! He's far too mean to lend anyone anything.'
- 3 We didn't get the contract, but \_\_\_\_\_. We have plenty of other work and there wasn't much profit in it.
- 4 The family are \_\_\_\_\_ poor. They live in a large house and have three cars.

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'I hear that Jane is getting married.'  
'*I didn't know that*—and she's my best friend.'
- 2 'I hope it will be sunny there when we go on holiday.'  
'*Don't depend on it!* It can be cold there, even in summer.'

## 5

## Why no noise?

*Mr Wilson was pleasantly surprised when he came home and found it unusually peaceful.*

'What's up?' said Mr Wilson to his wife in the kitchen. 'Why is it so quiet? It's usually so noisy.'

'Just be thankful for the quietness. It won't last long. Tom is having tea with a friend, Diana is out shopping and the twins are studying,' said Mrs Wilson.

'That's a first!' exclaimed Mr Wilson. 'Usually they don't start their homework until it's time to go to bed.'

'They have a long essay to be handed in tomorrow and, if it's late, they will be given another one to do as well,' explained Mrs Wilson. 'Their new teacher is quite strict.'

'Quite right, too!' replied Mr Wilson. 'It's beyond me how anyone could bear to try to teach English literature to a bunch of teenagers. I certainly couldn't do it.'

'Teaching's certainly not my cup of tea, either,' said Mrs Wilson. 'It's fortunate that we're both accountants then, isn't it?'

'Speak for yourself!' said Mr Wilson. 'After the day I've had, I'm not sure I want to be an accountant either. All my clients have left it until the last possible moment to send me the information for their tax returns.'

'So what's new?' asked Mrs Wilson. 'Practically all of my clients do that every year.'

Just then the front door slammed. Diana had returned from her shopping trip and she greeted her parents in the kitchen before going to her room. After a few minutes, loud pop music could be heard coming from upstairs. Then the door slammed again and Tom appeared to say that he had returned. As soon as he left the kitchen the sound of the television could be heard, loudly, from the front room.

'That's all I need!' groaned Mr Wilson. 'Whatever happened to the peace and quiet? I was just beginning to get used to it.'

'Dream on! You didn't really expect it to last, did you?' asked Mrs Wilson.

'Well, I did think that it was too good to be true,' said Mr Wilson sadly.

## Useful Expressions

### beyond

#### it's beyond me

You use **it's beyond me** to emphasize that you do not understand something:

- *It's beyond me where Meg gets all that money to spend on clothes.*
- *It's beyond me how Anne puts up with her husband's rude behaviour.*

### cup

#### not my cup of tea

You use **not my cup of tea** in an informal context to refer to something in which you are not interested or which you do not like:

- *Beach holidays are not my cup of tea.*
- *Opera's not my cup of tea.*

### dream

#### dream on!

You say **dream on!** in an informal context to someone to tell them that an idea is not practical or that something is not likely to happen:

- *'I'd love to have a car like that.'*  
**'Dream on!** You probably couldn't even afford the petrol for it.'
- *'I'm thinking of getting some kind of job in Hollywood to try to get a part in a film.'*  
**'Dream on!** Hollywood is full of people doing that and hardly any of them get into films.'

#### Language Help

The expression **in your dreams!** is used in the same way.

### first

#### that's a first!

You say **that's a first!** in an informal context when something surprising or unexpected happens:

- *'Jane was the first to arrive at the party.'*  
**'That's a first! She's usually late.'**
- *'Tom says that he's going to start saving.'*  
**'That's a first! He's always been very extravagant.'**

### good

#### too good to be true

You say **too good to be true** to refer to something exceptionally good or favourable that you feel cannot be true or real or that does not happen:

- *The bank manager originally said that I might get a bank loan to start my new business, but it was too good to be true. He refused to lend me money when he studied the figures.*
- *I thought that I had won the lottery last week, but it was too good to be true. I had read the numbers wrongly.*

### need

#### that's all I need!

You say **that's all I need!** to refer to a difficulty or something unpleasant which occurs when you are already having a lot of problems to deal with:

- *That's all I need! I've spent the morning trying to sort out the catering arrangements for the wedding reception and now you say that the band has cancelled.*

- **That's all I need!** I already have a house full of guest and my son has just rung to say that he's coming home for the weekend and bringing two friends.

## new

### so what's new?

You say **so what's new?** in an informal context to emphasize that you do not find something at all surprising or unexpected:

- 'John promised to attend the meeting but he didn't turn up.'  
'**So what's new?** He's completely unreliable.'
- 'We had to cancel the picnic yesterday because it was raining.'  
'**So what's new?** It's very risky holding outdoor events in this climate.'

## right

### quite right, too!

You say **quite right, too!** to emphasize that you agree with something:

- 'The principal has threatened to suspend any student who is found guilty of bullying.'  
'**Quite right, too!** The rest of the students must be protected from bullies.'
- 'I'm planning to take a few days off next month.'  
'**Quite right, too!** You work too hard!'

## speak

### speak for yourself

You say **speak for yourself** to someone when you wish to remind them that they are only expressing their own opinion and that other people, including you, might think differently:

- 'This year's exams were much easier than last year's.'  
'**Speak for yourself!** I thought they were much more difficult.'
- 'The lecture on local history was very boring.'  
'**Speak for yourself!** I found it very interesting.'

## up

### what's up?

You say **what's up?** when you want to know if something, particularly something bad, has happened, why someone is upset, etc:

- **What's up?** Everyone's looking miserable.
- I just met Jane and she was crying. **What's up?**

### Language Help

The expression sometimes takes the form of **what's up with someone?**:

- **What's up with Jim?** He looks angry.



## Exercise 5

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'The driver who caused the accident has been sent to prison.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ He was driving dangerously.'
- 2 You look very sad. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 'This hotel is very comfortable.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_! My room is tiny and very noisy.'

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 Serious plays are **not my cup of** \_\_\_\_\_ ; I prefer comedy.
- 2 **That's all I** \_\_\_\_\_ ! One of my assistants has just phoned in to say she's sick and the other two are on holiday.
- 3 I was told at first that I had won a car but it was **too good to be** \_\_\_\_\_ . My prize was a bottle of wine.

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in the meaning.

- 1 **I don't understand** how Jack can afford to live in that luxury flat.
- 2 'Bill got rather drunk at the party.'  
'**That's not at all surprising**. Bill has been drinking too much for a long time.'
- 3 'Tom came top in the maths exam.'  
'**That's very unexpected!** He usually fails.'

**D** Write down a spoken expression from the passage which has a similar meaning to **in your dreams!** and show how it is used.

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## 6

## Will it rain?

*Jenny was worrying about the weather when she met her friend Jill inside the supermarket.*

'Wouldn't you know it? It's started to rain and we were hoping to have a barbecue tonight,' said Jenny to Meg.

'The rain might not last,' replied Meg optimistically. 'The weather forecast is that it should clear up by this afternoon. I shouldn't wonder if we have a warm evening.'

'I certainly hope so,' said Jenny. 'We're really having the barbecue to try and amuse the children. They keep saying they're bored all the time. Roll on the end of the school holidays!'

'You took the words right out of my mouth,' agreed Meg. 'My two keep saying that they have nothing to do and keep quarrelling with each other. Yet, when they're at school they say they hate it.'

'Same here!' replied Jenny. 'Mine seem to have spent the entire holiday quarrelling with each other. I suppose it's because they're teenagers. Hopefully, they'll get better as they get older.'

'Don't hold your breath!' said Meg. 'My sister's son and daughter are in their early twenties, still living at home and still quarrelling all the time. Apparently, that's quite common nowadays.'

'Don't say that!' exclaimed Jenny. 'It's enough to make me want to leave home. Still, I'd better get on and get this shopping done or we won't have anything to eat at the barbecue.'

Jenny had just about finished her shopping when she met old Mrs Jackson. 'Isn't that just like the thing?' said Jenny to herself. 'Trust me to meet the town gossip when I'm in a hurry!'

Jenny politely explained to Mrs Jackson that she was rushing home to prepare for a barbecue and had very little time to chat. 'You mark my words,' said Mrs Jackson. 'There's going to be a storm this evening.'

'Oh, no!' thought Jenny, worrying about her barbecue as she went to the checkout.

## Useful Expressions

### breath

#### don't hold your breath!

You use **don't hold your breath!** in an informal context to tell someone that something will either never happen or will take a long time to happen:

- *'Bob said that he will definitely give me the money he owes me next week.'*  
**'Don't hold your breath!** Bob's borrowed money from most of his friends and he's never repaid it.'
- *'The builder says that the repairs to our house will be finished next week.'*  
**'Don't hold your breath!** My parents employed the same builder last year and he took months to finish a really small job.'

### know

#### wouldn't you know it?

You say **wouldn't you know it?** when something unexpected has happened and has caused problems for you:

- **Wouldn't you know it?** *I was a few minutes late and the train, which is always late, was early.*
- **Wouldn't you know it?** *I decided to drive to work today for an early appointment and the car wouldn't start.*

#### Language Help

This expression sometimes takes the form **wouldn't you just know it?**

This expression is used in a similar way to **isn't that just like the thing?**

### like

#### isn't that just like the thing?

You say **isn't that just like the thing?** when you are suggesting that it is typical of something bad or inconvenient to happen at such a time or in such a situation:

- **Isn't that just like the thing?** *Property prices in the area started to rise just after I sold my flat at a ridiculously low price.*
- **Isn't that just like the thing?** *The boss wanted to see me early this morning and for the first time ever I was late.*

#### Language Help

This expression is used in a similar way to **wouldn't you know it?**

### roll

#### roll on ...!

You say **roll on** something when you want something to happen very soon:

- *I'm tired of studying. **Roll on** the end of term!*
- **Roll on** Friday! *I'm going on holiday.*

### same

#### same here

You say **same here** to show that you feel or think the same way as someone else or to show that your situation is similar to that of someone else:

- *'I prefer tea to coffee.'*  
**'Same here!** *I find it more refreshing.'*

- 'I have both young children and elderly parents to look after.'  
'Same here—and it isn't easy!'

## say

### don't say that!

You say **don't say that!** when someone has said something that you do not want to be true:

- 'The woman in the local shop said that there's going to be a bad storm!'  
'**Don't say that!** Our friends have just gone out to sea in a small boat.'
- 'It sounds as though there's something seriously wrong with your car's engine.'  
'**Don't say that!** I can't possibly afford to spend any more money on it.'

## trust

### trust me!

You use **trust me!** when you think that something which you have done or said is typical of you:

- **Trust me** to forget Anne's address! I have a very poor memory.
- **Trust me** to drop Jack's precious vase! I'm so clumsy!

### Language Help

This expression can also be used with reference to someone else, as **trust you!**, **trust him!**, etc.

You can also use **trust me!** when you want someone to believe that you are honest, trustworthy, reliable, etc:

- **Trust me!** I'll look after your financial investments for you.

## wonder

### I shouldn't wonder

You say **I shouldn't wonder** when you mean that you would not be surprised if something happened:

- **I shouldn't wonder** if Bill fails the exam. He has hardly done any work for it.
- **I shouldn't wonder** if Anne is late. She has a long journey to get here.

## word

### you mark my words

You say **you mark my words** to someone when you mean that they should pay particular attention to what you are saying:

- **You mark my words.** Jane will leave Peter when she finds out that he's lost all his money.
- **You mark my words.** That young man will end up in prison.

### you took the words right out of my mouth

You say **you took the words right out of my mouth** when someone has just said what you were going to say:

- 'I think that we need more time to consider the proposal.'  
'**You took the words right out of my mouth.** We need more information.'
- 'The firm is in financial difficulties and we need to think about reducing the size of the workforce.'  
'**You took the words right out of my mouth.**'

## Exercise 6

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *I **wouldn't be surprised** if Jane moves back to the city. She doesn't enjoy **living in the country**.*
- 2 *'I think we should have a party to celebrate Dad's birthday.'  
'**That's just what I was going to say**. Let's start planning it.'*
- 3 *'I prefer white meat to red meat.'  
'**I do too**.'*

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 *'I think we're about to run out of petrol.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ We're miles from the nearest garage!'*
- 2 *I feel very tired. \_\_\_\_\_ the weekend!*
- 3 *'I'm waiting for Ben to call. He said he'd ring me back.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ He's very unreliable.'*

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 ***Wouldn't you** \_\_\_\_\_ **it?** I was planning to visit my friends in America this summer and I've just heard that they are coming over here.*
- 2 *\_\_\_\_\_ **you** to get lost on the way here! You have a very poor sense of direction!*

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is similar in meaning to **wouldn't you know it?** Show how it is used in a sentence.

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*Sara was dissatisfied with her job. She brought this up when she and her office colleagues were having a coffee break.*

She said, 'I'm really tired of this job. It's so boring. I think I'll go and train to be a model.'

'**In your dreams!**' said Emma. 'Have you any idea how difficult it is to be a successful model? For every one who becomes a model there are hundreds who don't make it. You would be mad to try it.'

'Even if you do become reasonably successful, it's a very tough life, **believe you me,**' said Jill. 'My friend's sister was a fashion model for several years and she had to give it up. Apart from anything else, you have to starve yourself to stay thin.'

'**Okay, okay, okay!**' said Sara. 'It was just an idea. I've just been thinking of things that would get me out of here. I might see about a job as an air hostess. I saw an ad about that the other day.'

'**When it comes down to it,**' said Pat, 'they're just waitresses in the sky. Anyway, I don't think they're called air hostesses anymore. Aren't they called flight attendants or cabin staff?'

'**Who cares?**' replied Sara. 'Anything would be better than coming in here day after day and staring at a computer screen. There must be more to life than this.'

'**Give it a rest,** Sara!' said Emma. 'The work here's not all that bad and we're lucky to be in good, steady work. There's a lot of unemployment out there.'

'**Heavens!**' exclaimed Sara. 'You sound just like my father. **Do me a favour** and stop offering me advice.'

'That was rather rude, **to put it mildly,**' said Pat. 'Emma was just trying to help. You should apologize.'

Sara remained silent and Emma said to Pat, 'Thanks, but don't worry. **What's the use?** Anyway, it's time we got back to work.'

## Useful Expressions

### believe

#### believe you me

You use **believe you me** to emphasize the truth of what you are going to say or have said:

- **Believe you me.** *Mike's house is not worth the price he paid for it.*
- **Believe you me.** *Anne will regret quarrelling with her family.*

### care

#### who cares?

You say **who cares?** to show that you do not care about something because you do not think it is important:

- *'We're going to be late for the party.'*  
**'Who cares?'** *It's going to be a boring affair, anyway.'*
- *'We're supposed to finish this project today.'*  
**'Who cares?'** *The boss is going to be out of the office until the end of the week.'*

### down

#### when it comes down to it

You say **when it comes down to it** to emphasize the most important point about a situation:

- **When it comes down to it,** *I have to find a job this week in order to pay the rent.*
- **When it comes down to it,** *the cottage is just not big enough for us, although we'd love to live there.*

### dream

#### in your dreams!

You say **in your dreams!** in an informal context to someone to tell them that an idea is not practical or that something is not likely to happen:

- *'One day I'm going to live in a house like that.'*  
**'In your dreams!'** *You'd have to be a billionaire to afford it.'*
- *'I'd love to buy that dress to wear to Mary's wedding.'*  
**'In your dreams!'** *It's a designer dress and costs what you earn in three months.'*

#### Language Help

You use the expression **dream on!** in the same way.

### favour

#### do me a favour

You say **do me a favour** to ask someone to help you in some way or do something for you. In the context described in the passage it is used rather rudely to ask someone to stop doing something:

- **Do me a favour** *and get me a sandwich when you're out.*
- **Do me a favour** *and turn that music down.*

#### Language Help

You can also use **do me a favour**, rather rudely and in an informal context, in reply to what you consider to be a foolish question or suggestion:

- 'Are you going on a date with John?'  
'Do me a favour! He's far too old and boring for me!'

## heavens!

You say **heavens!** when you are surprised or annoyed:

- **Heavens!** There's a strange looking animal in the garden.
- **Heavens!** Look at the state of my son's bedroom. He can't have cleaned it for months.

### Language Help

You can use **good heavens!** in the same way:

- **Good heavens!** How did you children get so dirty?

## mildly

### to put it mildly

You say **to put it mildly** to show that you could use much stronger words about a situation, perhaps because you are being polite:

- **To put it mildly**, Jack isn't very honest.
- **To put it mildly**, it is a very boring place.

## okay

### okay, okay, okay!

You say **okay, okay, okay!** in rather an annoyed way to show that you accept what someone says and to get them to stop arguing with you or criticizing you:

- 'You'll have to hurry or you're going to be late for work again.'  
'**Okay, okay, okay!** I'm just going.'

- 'You're going to have to do a lot more studying if you're going to pass your exams.'  
'**Okay, okay, okay!** I'm going to start studying this evening.'

### Language Help

This expression can also be spelt **OK, OK, OK!**

## rest

### give it a rest

You use **give it a rest** in an informal context when you ask someone, rather rudely, to stop talking about something or to stop doing something:

- **Give it a rest**, Mary. We all know that you had a good holiday but we're tired of hearing about it.
- We're all sorry that you failed your driving test, but **give it a rest**. You've talked about nothing else all day.

## use.

### what's the use?

You say **what's the use?** to show that there is no point in doing or saying something because this will have no effect:

- You can try to stop Lucy from leaving her job, but **what's the use?** She always does what she wants, whatever anyone says.
- Dad told me to have a look at the job ads in the local paper, but **what's the use?** I don't have any qualifications or experience.



## Exercise 7

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_, Bill doesn't really enjoy work.
- 2 I could ask Dad for a loan but \_\_\_\_\_ He'll refuse.'
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, Jim. We don't want to hear any more of your complaints about the holiday accommodation.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ and lend me your car this afternoon. I have to meet some friends at the airport.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *When it comes* \_\_\_\_\_ *to it*, we just cannot afford to buy a house in this area.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ *you me*, I will never forgive Bill for what he did to me.
- 3 'We're going to be late for school.'  
'Who \_\_\_\_\_? It's the last day of term.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'You can't go to the party looking like that.'  
'OK, OK, OK! I'm just going upstairs to change.'
- 2 'I'd love to be able to eat in restaurants like that every night.'  
'Dream on! Only very rich people can afford to eat there.'

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which you might use when you are surprised or annoyed. Use this expression in a sentence.

## 8

## To tell or not to tell?

*Jill had been acting strangely and her friends were wondering what was wrong with her.*

'What's got into Jill?' asked Dave. 'She hasn't said a word all evening and she's usually so talkative.'

'I haven't the faintest,' replied Mike. 'Maybe she's not feeling well.'

'For what it's worth,' said Sara, 'I think she must be ill. I'm worried about her. It's most unlike her to be so silent.'

'Jill's not ill,' said Jane. 'She's just in love.'

Everyone groaned—because Jill was always falling in love—and Mike said, 'Not again! Who is it this time?'

'Wait for it!' said Jane. 'Paul Davis!'

'I thought Paul was going out with Mary. How long has Jill been seeing him?' asked Dave.

'You've got me there!' replied Jane. 'Jill's not saying much about her new love. I only found out about it by accident.'

'Just between you and me, I think that Paul's still going out with Mary,' said Dave. 'I saw them together last night. **Actually**, I heard that they were getting engaged.'

'That's Paul all over,' said Mike. 'He's not very honest when he's dealing with girls.'

'Poor Jill,' said Sara. 'I'm sure she doesn't know. One of us should tell her so that she doesn't get hurt.'

'Don't look at me!' exclaimed Jane. 'I know Jill very well. She'll just get upset and start blaming the person who told her.'

'I quite agree,' said Mike. 'We should leave her to find out for herself. Anyway, I can't believe that she doesn't know what Paul's like. He has a terrible reputation.'

'Well, I'm going to tell her,' said Sara. 'I'd expect one of you to tell me if something like that happened.'

'Rather you than me,' said Dave. 'Jane's quite right. Jill will start screaming and saying that it's not true and that you're making it all up.'

Sara, insisting that Jill should be told the truth, went off to find her to tell her the bad news.

## Useful Expressions

### actually

You use **actually** (in this way) when you are telling someone something surprising, unexpected or strange:

- *Jane looks a lot younger than her husband, but, **actually**, they are the same age.*
- *I thought this job would be very boring, but it's not. **Actually**, I find it very interesting.*

#### Language Help

You also use **actually** when you wish to emphasize that something is really true or that something really happened:

- *She **actually** broke off their engagement by email.*
- *I **actually** saw her steal the dress from the shop.*

The word **actually** is often used with very little meaning and so it is often difficult to differentiate between the above senses.

You can also use **actually** when you want to correct in a polite way something which someone has said:

- *'A great many English people come here in the summer.'*  
*'**Actually**, we're Scots.'*

### between

#### just between you and me

You say **just between you and me** when you do not want the person to whom you are telling something to repeat it to someone else:

- ***Just between you and me**, I don't think that Jack and Sue are very happy together.*
- ***Just between you and me**, I think that Peter's business is in financial difficulties.*

### faint

#### I haven't the faintest

You use **I haven't the faintest** in an informal context to emphasize that you do not know the answer to something:

- ***I haven't the faintest** where Liz lives. We haven't been in touch for many years.*
- *'What did Jim mean?'*  
*'**I haven't the faintest!**'*

#### Language Help

The expression is a shortened form of **I haven't the faintest idea**, which you can use in the same way.

The informal expression **I haven't the foggiest** is used in the same way.

## get

### you've got me there!

You say **you've got me there!** when someone asks you a question to which you do not know the answer:

- 'How long a car journey is it?'  
**'You've got me there!** It's a very long time since I was there and I don't know what the roads are like now.'
- 'How old is Lucy?'  
**'You've got me there!** She's older than her husband, but I don't know by how much.'

### what's got into ...?

You ask **what's got into** someone when you want to know why they are behaving the way they are:

- **What's got into Sue?** She's been in a very bad mood all day.
- **What's got into Jim?** I've never seen him so cheerful.

## look

### don't look at me!

You say **don't look at me!** when you do not want to do something and you think that someone might suggest that you do:

- 'Who would like to drive?'  
**'Don't look at me!** I hate driving!'
- 'Who's going to tell the neighbours about their broken window?'  
**'Don't look at me!** I had nothing to do with it!'

## over

### that's ... all over

You say **that's** someone **all over** when you mean that they are behaving exactly as you would expect them to behave:

- **That's Pat all over!** She's been rude to the other members of the committee and upset them.
- **That's Jack all over!** He's being charming to all the pretty girls and ignoring the older women.

## rather

### rather you than me

You say **rather you than me** to show that you would not want to do something, or to be involved in something, that someone else is going to do:

- I hear that you are going to take part in the charity marathon. **Rather you than me!** I couldn't even run a mile!
- You're going to ask Dad for a loan? **Rather you than me!** He's always complaining about how much we all spend!

## wait

### wait for it!

You say **wait for it!** when you are about to tell someone something that you know will surprise them:

- I've just heard that one of our friends has been arrested for speeding. **Wait for it!** It's Sue and she's the slowest driver I know!
- The winner of the essay prize has just been announced and **wait for it!** It's Sam and he's a terrible writer!

## worth

### for what it's worth

You use **for what it's worth** when you wish to say that something is only based on your own opinion:

- **For what it's worth,** I've always found that John is a very reliable worker.
- **For what it's worth,** I have found Pat to be rather dishonest.

## Exercise 8

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 We've just been told who the new managing director is and, \_\_\_\_\_  
It's our friend Jim!
- 2 I know that Anne is very much in love with Bill, but, \_\_\_\_\_, I don't trust him.
- 3 I thought that it would be quite difficult to find a job in the area but, \_\_\_\_\_, I found one quite easily.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'I think I'll go sailing this afternoon.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ **you than me**. There's going to be a storm.'
- 2 **That's Jim all** \_\_\_\_\_. He promised to help with the garden and he hasn't turned up.
- 3 'When did Pat and John get married?'  
'**You've** \_\_\_\_\_ **me there!** It was about 20 years ago but I can't give you the exact year.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'What's the date of Anne's wedding?'  
'**I really don't know**. I've only just heard that she's getting married.'
- 2 **Don't tell anyone else** but I think that Jim has serious money problems.

**D** In what situation would you use the expression **I haven't the foggiest**? Use the expression in a sentence.

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## 9

## How to avoid decorating

*Pete had just overheard his mother asking his father to help her redecorate their front room. To avoid being asked to help, he was now making himself scarce.*

'Guess what?' said Pete as he met his brother Joe at the garden gate. 'Mum's decided to redecorate the front room again. I'm out of here before she asks me to help! I hate painting and putting up wallpaper.'

'You and me both!' said Joe. 'I'll tell you what! Wait until I leave this stuff in my room and we'll go and have a coffee in that new place on the High Street. It's meant to be very good and some of our friends will be there.'

'OK!' said Pete, 'but watch that Mum doesn't see you. Take it from me. She's determined to get the room finished today and she's looking for people to help. At the moment she's only got Dad. I feel sorry for him, but I don't want to join him.'

'Why does she want to redecorate the room?' asked Joe. 'We only had it done a few months ago.'

'Pass!' laughed Pete. 'All you need to know is that she's doing it and we need to get away from here fast. Be as quick as you can!'

Joe went off into the house, hoping to avoid his mother, and seemed to take a long time putting his bag in his room. Pete was just about to leave when he appeared.

'About time too!' exclaimed Pete. 'What have you been doing? I thought you must be painting a wall by now.'

'Not likely!' Joe replied, 'but I heard Mum saying that she wants the hall redecorated too. What a thought!'

'That's all the more reason to get out of here!' said Pete. 'I think I can hear Mum calling. Let's go or we've had it!'

Off the brothers went just as their parents came out the front door on their way to buy paper and paint. Their mother was looking very enthusiastic, but their father was looking rather miserable. He didn't like decorating either, but he had no choice.

## Useful Expressions

### both

#### you and me both!

You say **you and me both!** in an informal context when you agree with someone:

- 'I like to spend my holidays somewhere sunny.'  
'**You and me both!**'
- 'I don't like flying.'  
'**You and me both!** I'd far rather go by train.'

### guess

#### guess what?

You say **guess what?** when you want to tell someone something surprising or exciting:

- **Guess what?** Jill and Pete are expecting a baby.
- **Guess what?** I've won a prize in a holiday competition. Would you like to come to Italy with me?

### Language Help

You use **you'll never guess** in a similar way:

- **You'll never guess** what's happened. I've got a part in a TV play.

### have

#### we've had it!

You say **we've** (or **I've**, **you've**, **he's**, etc) **had it!** when someone is likely to be in trouble or danger or to experience something unpleasant:

- **We've had it!** The teacher's found out that we've been playing truant!
- **You've had it!** Mum knows that you stayed out all night!

### likely

#### not likely!

You say **not likely!** to mean that you definitely will not do something:

- 'Are you going to study medicine like your father?'  
'**Not likely!** I get sick at the sight of blood.'
- 'Are you going to go on holiday with your parents?'  
'**Not likely!** I'm going camping with some friends.'

### out

#### I'm out of here!

You say **I'm out of here!** in an informal context when you are leaving somewhere quickly for some reason:

- 'Is it 8 o'clock already? **I'm out of here!** I'm late for work!
- 'Dad's just found out that I damaged his car. **I'm out of here!**

### pass!

You say **pass!** in an informal context when you cannot or do not want to answer a question:

- 'How can Jim possibly prefer Sue to his beautiful wife?'  
'**Pass!** It seems unbelievable.'

- 'Do you think Tom's a good workman?'  
**'Pass! He's my brother-in-law.'**

### Language Help

The expression **pass!** comes from a quiz or a game show where a contestant cannot answer a question.

### take

#### take it from me

You say **take it from me** when you ask someone to believe or accept what you say:

- **Take it from me.** Anne is not to be trusted.
- **Take it from me.** Jack will be a famous actor one day.

### tell

#### I'll tell you what!

You use **I'll tell you what!** when you wish to suggest something:

- 'It's Dad's birthday next week and I can't think what to give him.'  
**'I'll tell you what! We could give a surprise party for him.'**

- 'I've asked some people to dinner tonight and I can't think what to cook for them.'  
**'I'll tell you what! Let's have a barbecue!'**

### thought

#### what a thought!

You say **what a thought!** when you refer to what you think is a very unpleasant idea:

- 'Perhaps your father will marry Sara?'  
**'What a thought! We all dislike her.'**
- 'According to the weather forecast we're going to have a long, cold winter.'  
**'What a thought! I think I'll emigrate to somewhere warm and sunny!'**

### time

#### about time too!

You say **about time too!** when you mean that someone is late or has taken a long time to do something:

- **About time too!** I thought that you were going to miss the train!
- 'I've finished digging the garden.'  
**'About time too!** I thought that you would've finished it yesterday.'



## Exercise 9

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'I hear that the boss wants us to work on Saturdays next month.'  
'What a **very unpleasant idea!**'
- 2 'Bill and I are thinking of spending the weekend in the country.'  
'I have a **suggestion to make**. You could borrow my parent's holiday home.'
- 3 **Believe what I say**. Some workers are going to lose their jobs. The firm is in financial difficulties.
- 4 **You'll never guess!** I won first prize in a cookery competition and the prize is a trip to France.

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 I've just realized that it's nearly midnight. \_\_\_\_\_ I need a good night's sleep before my exam tomorrow.
- 2 'Are you going to study this afternoon?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ I'm going to watch the football final on TV.'
- 3 'Why do you think Jack got the manager's job?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ It seems incredible when there were so many other good candidates.'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 **We've had** \_\_\_\_\_! Dad's found out that we broke the window of his greenhouse.
- 2 'I've just finished packing.'  
'**About** \_\_\_\_\_ **too!** The taxi's arrived to take us to the airport.'
- 3 'I find this work very boring.'  
'**You and me** \_\_\_\_\_! I'm going to look for another job.'

## 10

## No holiday from family bickering

*The Lang family were going abroad for their holidays. Not surprisingly, there was the usual bickering.*

'We'd better all go to bed early tonight,' said Mrs Lang. 'We'll have to leave for the airport at six o'clock tomorrow morning.'

'Come off it, Mum!' said Tony, her elder son. 'Our flight's not till 10 o'clock. We'll be far too early if we leave then.'

'We have to check in at eight o'clock and we have to allow time to drive to the airport and park the car in the long-stay car park,' replied his mother. 'You know I hate being late. So no more arguing! We're leaving at six o'clock and that's that!'

In the morning Mr Lang commented as he packed the car, 'It's just as well we have a big car. It beats me why you all need such a lot of luggage.'

'Look who's talking!' said his wife. 'Your golf clubs are taking up most space.'

At last they were off. There was not much traffic on the road and they arrived early at the airport. 'I told you so,' said Tony. 'We're far too early.'

'Stop complaining, Tony,' said his father. 'You should be grateful that you're going on holiday.'

'Why break the habit of a lifetime?' asked his younger sister, Liz. 'Tony always finds something to complain about.'

'You were complaining about leaving early too,' replied Tony.

'Get lost!' said Liz. 'I'm going to look at the duty free shop. Are you coming, Mum?'

'First things first,' said Mrs Lang. 'I'm dying for a cup of tea.'

'Don't spend any money in the duty free shop,' said Mr Lang to his daughter. 'The money I gave you is to last the whole holiday. You're not getting any more. I've had it up to here with your extravagance.'

Just then the Langs' younger son, Dave, came to say that their flight had been called.

## Useful Expressions

### beat

#### it beats me

You say **it beats me** when you cannot understand something:

- **It beats me** why Jack stays with this firm. He could get a much better job elsewhere.
- **It beats me** why Jim decided to work in the family factory. He could have gone to university.

### come

#### come off it!

You say **come off it!** to someone, informally and rather rudely, when you think that they have said something that you disagree with or that you think is untrue or stupid:

- 'I think Dad's mean not to give me the money for that dress!'  
'**Come off it, Meg!** He gave you money for clothes only yesterday.'
- 'I hope our team wins today.'  
'**Come off it!** Three of our best players are injured. We're bound to lose.'

### die

#### I'm dying for

You say that you are dying for something in an informal context if you want it very much:

- *It's very hot and I'm dying for a glass of cold water.*
- *I'm dying for something to eat. I haven't eaten since breakfast.*

### first

#### first things first

You say **first things first** to show that what you think is the most important thing should be done first before anything else:

- *We've a lot to do this morning, but **first things first**. Let's open the mail.*
- *The police will want to investigate the cause of the accident, but **first things first**. We must attend to the injured.*

### habit

#### why break the habit of a lifetime?

You say **why break the habit of a lifetime?** as rather a rude, disapproving comment about someone who is doing something, usually something annoying or unpleasant, that they are in the habit of doing:

- 'We all bought John drinks but he left without buying us any.'  
'**Why break the habit of a lifetime?** John is too mean to buy anyone a drink.'
- 'I'd like to go to the beach but Sue is insisting on going shopping.'  
'**Why break the habit of a lifetime?** All Sue ever wants to do on holiday is to go round the shops.'

### lost

#### get lost!

You say **get lost!** when you tell someone rudely to go away:

- **Get lost!** Can't you see I'm busy?
- **Get lost!** I'm trying to work!

## talk

### look who's talking!

You say **look who's talking!** when you tell someone that they are criticizing someone for doing something that they do themselves:

- *'Joe shared my room last night and he kept me awake all night by snoring.'*  
**'Look who's talking!** Everyone in the flat can hear your snoring every night.'
- *'Sara spends a huge amount of money on clothes.'*  
**'Look who's talking!** You buy something new to wear every week.'

## tell

### I told you so

You say **I told you so** when you had warned someone that something bad would happen and it did:

- *'The second-hand computer which I bought isn't very reliable.'*  
**'I told you so** when you were buying it, but you wouldn't listen.'
- *'The heating system doesn't work properly.'*  
**'I told you so** when you rented the flat, but you wouldn't believe me.'

#### Language Help

The expression **what did I tell you?** has a similar meaning:

- *'I offered Jim the job, but he didn't turn up for work.'*  
**'What did I tell you?** Jim's lazy and unreliable.'

## that

### and that's that!

You say **and that's that!** when you have come to a decision which you will not change and do not want any more discussion about the subject:

- *You're not having a teenage party here* **and that's that!**
- *I'm not lending you my car* **and that's that!**

#### Language Help

You can also use **and that's that!** to mean that something has ended or finished:

- *We've both signed the divorce papers* **and that's that!** Our marriage is over.

## up

### I've had it up to here

You say **I've had it up to here** with someone or something when you are very annoyed with them and do not want to have anything to do with them any more:

- *I've had it up to here with teenagers.* I've decided to give up teaching.
- *I've had it up to here with this job.* I'm going to resign.

## Exercise 10

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *Look who's \_\_\_\_\_!* You accused me of always being late and now you've arrived so late that we've missed the train.
- 2 'Do you think that Sara will offer to help with the extra work?'  
'Of course not! *Why \_\_\_\_\_ the habit of a lifetime?* Sara always does as little work as possible.'
- 3 You children can go and swim in the hotel pool soon, but \_\_\_\_\_  
*things* \_\_\_\_\_. We must unpack the suitcases.
- 4 'I feel that the boss has treated me very unfairly by giving me an unofficial warning.'  
'*Come \_\_\_\_\_ it, Jane!* Several customers have complained about you to him.'

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *I'm longing for* some sunshine. It has rained so much this year.
- 2 *I don't want anything more to do* with redecorating. Next time I'm going to pay someone to paint the house.
- 3 *Go away!* I'm trying to do my homework and you're disturbing me.

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 *I'm leaving this place for ever* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ *how Anne can lie on the beach all day and do nothing. I would get so bored.*

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is similar in meaning to **what did I tell you?** and show how it is used.

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*John and Pat were on holiday and had stopped for coffee at a little restaurant that sat on a hill and looked over a beautiful valley.*

'Now **that's what I call** a view!' exclaimed John.

'It's really lovely,' agreed Pat, 'but we'd better **get a move on** if we are to reach our hotel before dinner. We don't want to miss that because the food is supposed to be very good.'

'Yes, you're right,' replied John. 'I could stay here all day admiring the view, but **get cracking!** We've still got about 200 kilometres to go before we get to the hotel.'

'**And the rest!**' said Pat. 'I've just been looking at the map. It's nearer 300 kilometres. We must have got the distance wrong.'

'Then we'd better **step on it!**' replied John, as they drove back down to the motorway.

'**Famous last words!**' said Pat. 'Just look at this traffic! It's got much busier than it was before we went for coffee. Do you think we can get there on time?'

'**No problem!**' said John. 'The traffic is heavy, but it's moving along quite steadily. We'll easily get to the hotel before dinner.'

John was right. There were no major problems on the motorway and they arrived at the hotel in plenty of time to have a look round before dinner. It had been recommended to them by their friend Jill, who had stayed there once.

'**You've got to hand it to Jill!**' said Pat. 'She's very good at choosing hotels and this one looks just perfect. I wonder if it would be possible to stay a couple of extra nights.'

'I doubt it, but I'll go and check,' said John. He returned shortly, saying, '**I thought as much.** They're fully booked all summer.'

'**Never mind!** Let's just enjoy the time we have here. If we like it we can come again another time.'

## Useful Expressions

### call

#### that's what I call ...

You say **that's what I call** when you think that something is very good, as though it were a perfect example:

- *Now **that's what I call** a good cup of tea.*
- ***That's what I call** a fine portrait.*

### crack

#### get cracking

You say **get cracking** in an informal context when you mean that there is a need for hurry or speed:

- ***Get cracking!** That work has to be finished today!*
- *We should **get cracking**. The last bus leaves in half-an-hour.*

### hand

#### you've got to hand it to

You say **you've got to hand it to** someone when you mean that someone is very successful or skilful in some way and deserves to be praised:

- *Meg's not very popular in the firm, but **you've got to hand it to** her. She's a very good salesperson.*
- ***You've got to hand it to** Bob. He's not one of the brightest students, but he worked very hard and passed all his exams.*

### mind

#### never mind!

You say **never mind!** to someone to tell them that something is not important and does not matter:

- *'I'm going to be a bit late for the meeting.'*  
***'Never mind!** The important business is at the end.'*
- *'I'm sorry. I've spilt some wine on the table cloth.'*  
***'Never mind!** The stain will wash out.'*

### move

#### get a move on

You say **get a move on** in an informal context when you mean that there is a need for hurry or speed:

- ***Get a move on!** You're going to be late for school.*
- *We must **get a move on** or we'll be late for dinner.*

### problem

#### no problem!

You say **no problem!** when you think that something will be easy to do or get:

- *'I need my car back by Saturday.'*  
***'No problem!** It will be ready by tomorrow evening.'*
- *'I'm looking for a one-bedroom flat in this area.'*  
***'No problem!** There are quite a few vacant just now.'*

### Language Help

You can also say **no problem!** to show that you can do something that somebody has asked you to do and that you are willing to do so:

- *'Can you mend this torn dress for me?'*  
**'No problem! It will be ready tomorrow.'**

You can also use **no problem!** as an informal reply when somebody thanks you for doing something:

- *'Thanks for giving me a lift to the station.'*  
**'No problem!'**

### rest and the rest

You say **and the rest** to show that the actual number or amount of something is more than has been stated:

- *'A car like that would cost about \$60,000.'*  
**'And the rest! I'd say nearer \$70,000.'**
- *'It'll take us at least three days to finish this work.'*  
**'And the rest! Only half the workers are working on this project.'**

### step step on it

You say **step on it** in an informal context when you mean that there is a need for hurry or speed, especially with reference to driving a car:

- *You'll have to **step on it** or I'll be late for the interview.*

- ***Step on it!** I promised my mother that we wouldn't be late for lunch.*

### think

#### I thought as much

You say **I thought as much** when you have found out that you were right about something that you thought or suspected:

- ***I thought as much.** That boy who's making all the noise is our neighbour's son.*
- ***I thought as much.** The girl who got the job is the manager's daughter.*

### word

#### famous last words!

You say **famous last words!** to someone who has just said something that has been, or is likely to be, proved to be untrue:

- *'Thank goodness! That's the last customer of the day.'*  
**'Famous last words! A coach party has just arrived and we haven't put up the "Closed" sign yet.'**
- *'When Pat goes away to university next week it will be very peaceful with just the two of us in the house.'*  
**'Famous last words! I've just had a letter from Ben to ask if he and Anne and the children can stay here for a week while they are having repairs done to their house.'**



## Exercise 11

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'We need three single rooms for the first week in June.'  
'*That's not a problem.* The hotel's not busy then.'
- 2 'I'm sorry. I've used all the milk.'  
'*It doesn't matter.* There's more in the fridge.'
- 3 'Jim has asked Jane to marry him, but he's still married to someone else.'  
'*That's what I suspected.* I knew that he had been married and I didn't think that he had ever got divorced.'

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 I think that Sue must have paid £300,000 for that house.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_! Property in that part of London is incredibly expensive.'
- 2 Look at that beautiful house. \_\_\_\_\_ a fine piece of architecture.

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'That's the last of the Christmas orders despatched. We can go home for the holiday now.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ *last words!* We've just received a fax with an urgent order.'
- 2 *You've got to \_\_\_\_\_ it to* Bill. His legs were badly injured in a car accident but he manages to get around remarkably well.

**D** There are three expressions in the passage which are similar in meaning. Write them down and use one of them in a sentence.

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# 12

## A break from studying

*Mark and his friends were complaining about the amount of homework they still had to do although it was close to their final exams.*

'Do you think that Mr Black would give us less English homework if we explained that we need more time to study for the exams?' said Mark. 'I **nearly died** when he gave us this long essay to write over the weekend.'

'**That'll be the day!**' said Jack. 'He'll just say that we should have started revising for the exams earlier and that we need to practise our written English.'

'**Absolutely!**' agreed Mike. 'And the rest of the teachers are just as bad. They all keep on giving us lots of homework. I **could** certainly **do without** this long maths assignment that Mr Jones has given me.'

'**Give me maths any day,**' said Dave. 'I've got a history project that involves asking old people in the district about how the world was when they were young. It's very interesting, but it takes such a long time.'

'**You're telling me!**' said Frank. 'I'm doing that as well. It's due in on Monday and I haven't nearly finished. Do you think Mrs Harris would give me more time, if I asked her nicely?'

'I already asked her and she just said no, which wasn't very helpful,' said Dave. 'It's not surprising that we're all so tired. We go straight from studying at school to studying at home and there's no time for any leisure. **It's just not on!**'

'**I'm with you** on that. I think we all need a break,' said Bob. '**What about** going to the cinema this afternoon? It is the weekend, **remember!**'

'Good idea!' said Mike. 'Some free time will do us good.'

Thinking of his long history project, Dave at first refused until Bob said, 'Come on, Dave. We can't spend all our time studying, whether we've got exams or not. You'll feel better after a few hours away from your books and you'll probably get the history project done faster.'

Eventually Dave agreed and they went off to see what films were on at the cinemas.

## Useful Expressions

### absolutely!

You say **absolutely!** when you strongly agree with what somebody has said:

- *'I think we should ask for a pay rise since the company is doing so well.'*  
**'Absolutely!'**
- *'I think we all feel that the job should be offered to Bill Jones.'*  
**'Absolutely!'**

### day

#### that'll be the day!

You say **that'll be the day!** when you think that something is very unlikely to happen:

- *'Perhaps Mum and Dad will let us have a party in the house while they're away.'*  
**'That'll be the day!'**
- *'Do you think your elder brother will lend us his car to go to the city?'*  
**'That'll be the day!'**

### die

#### I nearly died

You say **I nearly died** in an informal context to show how surprised, shocked, embarrassed, etc. you were about something:

- *I nearly died when I realized that I had run out of petrol miles from the nearest town.*
- *I nearly died when my ex-husband walked into the room and I wished that I hadn't come to the party.*

### give

#### give me (something) any day

You say **give me (something) any day** when you mean that you much prefer something or someone to something or someone else:

- *I know you don't like flying, but give me a plane journey to a long car journey any day!*
- *I don't really understand modern art. Give me Monet to Picasso any day!*

### on

#### it's not on!

You say **it's not on!** when you mean that something is not at all acceptable:

- *It's not on! The boss says that we have to work all weekend to get this order out on time.*
- *It's not on! The landlord's put the rent up again and yet he never pays for any repairs to the flat.*

### remember

You use **remember** in this way when you wish to remind someone about something:

- *It's my wife's car, remember. You'll have to ask her if you want to borrow it.*
- *You said that you would come shopping with me today, remember.*

## tell

### you're telling me!

You say **you're telling me!** to emphasize how much you agree with someone:

- *'Property seems very expensive here.'*  
**'You're telling me!** *We could only afford to buy a very small flat.'*
- *'The office seems very crowded.'*  
**'You're telling me!** *The firm should really move to somewhere with more space.'*

## what

### what about?

You say **what about?** to suggest something to someone:

- **What about** *taking a taxi? It would be much quicker.*
- **What about** *meeting next Monday at 10 am?*

#### Language Help

You use **how about?** in the same way:

- **How about** *going out for dinner?*

## with

### I'm with you

You say **I'm with you** when you agree with or support someone:

- *'I think we should protest against the building of any more large office blocks in the area.'*  
**'I'm with you there.'**
- *'I feel that smoking should be banned in all areas of the office.'*  
**'I'm with you on that one.'**

## without

### I could do without

You say **I could do without** when you refer in an emphatic way to someone or something that you do not want to have or be involved in:

- *I already have more sweaters than I need.*  
**I could well do without** *another one.*
- *She's got enough problems as it is.* **She could do without** *a new untrained maid to add to them.*

## Exercise 12

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 You owe me money, \_\_\_\_\_, and I want it repaid by the end of the year.
- 2 'I think that we all agree that we should make a formal complaint. Is that right?'  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Our daughter has asked us for yet another loan and \_\_\_\_\_. She earns a lot of money and she never repays loans.
- 4 I left the house in a hurry to run after the dog and \_\_\_\_\_ when I realized that I was still wearing my pyjama trousers.

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'I feel that the class sizes in the local school are too big.'  
'I agree with you. We need smaller classes if the children are to learn properly.'
- 2 'We really need a better bus service if people are going to stop using their cars to get to the city.'  
'I'm in complete agreement! Yesterday I waited twenty-five minutes for one.'
- 3 I've had another offer of work and I don't need it right now. I have more than enough to cope with.
- 4 How about stopping for lunch soon? It's been six hours since we had breakfast and I'm hungry.

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I really don't like opera. Give me musical comedy any \_\_\_\_\_ !
- 2 'Do you think the boss will retire soon and let his son be manager?'  
'That'll be the \_\_\_\_\_ ! The boss wouldn't trust his son to run the business.'

# 13

## Consolation for failing

*Bob had just failed his driving test and his friend Tony was consoling him.*

'That's the end of my holiday plans,' said Bob miserably.

'How come?' said Tony.

'I've just failed my driving test,' replied Bob.

'Cheer up! I know you're hoping to share the driving on our trip to France,' said Tony, 'but that's six months away. You've got plenty of time to pass your driving test before then. You can apply to take it again.'

'My driving instructor was sure that I'd pass, but *it wasn't my day*,' said Bob. 'I was nearly late getting to the test centre and that made me nervous. Then the examiner seemed really bad-tempered and that made me even more nervous. *To tell you the truth*, I felt like getting out of the car halfway through the test. I just knew that he was going to fail me.'

'A lot of people fail their test first time,' said Tony. '*You'll see*, you'll pass it next time.'

'*No chance!*' said Bob, 'not if I get that same examiner. *There are no two ways about it*. He took an instant dislike to me. *Don't get me wrong!* I know they have to be strict, but this one was really nasty.'

'It was probably just his manner. I'm sure he didn't dislike you personally,' said Tony.

'Well, *you could have fooled me!*' replied Bob. 'He looked at me as if he hated me. He shouldn't be allowed to treat people like that.'

'Calm down!' said Tony. 'You probably just need some more practice and then you'll feel more confident. I've got some spare time this week. I could take you out a few times in my car and that would save some money on driving lessons.'

'That's very generous of you, but I can't possibly take up your free time,' said Bob.

'*No buts about it!*' replied Tony. 'I'm going to take you out driving. I'll phone you tonight to arrange a time.'

Bob thanked him and went home, feeling slightly less miserable.

## Useful Expressions

### but

#### no buts about it

You say **no buts about it** when you are determined that something will happen and do not wish to hear any disagreement or argument about it:

- *'It's very generous of you to offer to lend me the money, but I cannot possibly accept it.'*  
**'No buts about it.** *I can afford it and you can pay me back when you get a job.'*
- *I don't care if you promised to go out with your friends tonight. You're going to stay in and do your homework and there will be **no buts about it.***

### chance

#### no chance!

You use **no chance!** in this way when you think that there is no possibility of something happening:

- *'I suppose your dad might give you the money for a taxi.'*  
**'No chance!** *He told me yesterday that I was to stop spending so much money.'*
- *'There might still be some tickets left for the concert. We could phone the box office.'*  
**'No chance!** *They were all sold out the day they went on sale.'*

### cheer

#### cheer up!

You say **cheer up!** to someone who is sad or depressed when you want them to be more cheerful or optimistic:

- **Cheer up!** *I know you didn't get the flat you wanted, but there are plenty of other flats for sale in that area.*
- **Cheer up!** *Your fiancé hasn't gone away for ever. He will be back next month.*

### day

#### it wasn't my day

You say **it wasn't my day** of a day when several things go wrong and you are not at all successful:

- *I hoped to win the tennis tournament but **it wasn't my day.** I forgot to bring my favourite racquet, I injured my shoulder in the first game and my opponent played much better than he usually does.*
- *I should have got the job, but **it wasn't my day.** I went to the wrong address first of all. Then one of the interviewers obviously thought that I was too young, and one of them asked some very strange questions which I just couldn't answer.*

#### Language Help

The expression often takes the form of **it just wasn't my day.**

### fool

#### you could have fooled me!

You use **you could have fooled me!** to show that you do not believe what someone has told you:

- *'I've been studying hard for the exams, Dad.'*  
**you could have fooled me!**

**'You could have fooled me!** You've been out with your friends every evening this week.'

- 'I think Jim loved Sara very much.'  
**'You could have fooled me!** He was going out with Jane while he was engaged to Sara.'

## how

### how come?

You say **how come?** when you ask why in an informal context:

- 'There are no trains today.'  
**'How come?'**
- 'Joe has left his job.'  
**'How come?'**
- **How come** the party's been cancelled?

## see

### you'll see

You use **you'll see** when you tell someone that that they will find out that what you are saying is true:

- The teacher will realize that you are not to blame. **You'll see!**
- Fred will soon get a job, **you'll see.**

## truth

### to tell you the truth

You say **to tell you the truth** when you intend to say something in a clear and honest way, without trying to be polite or kind:

- 'Did you enjoy the meal?'  
**'To tell you the truth,** it was too spicy for me.'
- 'Do you like your daughter's new boyfriend?'  
**'To tell you the truth,** I don't really trust him.'

## way

### there are no two ways about it

You say **there are no two ways about it** when you wish to say that you are absolutely certain about something:

- **There are no two ways about it.** I'm going to have to get a part-time job.
- **There are no two ways about it.** Jack has behaved very badly.

## wrong

### don't get me wrong

You say **don't get me wrong** when you don't want someone to misunderstand or be upset by what you are going to say:

- **Don't get me wrong!** I think Amy is a very good mother, but she does tend to spoil her children a bit.
- **Don't get me wrong!** I'd love to come on holiday with you, but I prefer to visit cities than stay at a beach resort all week long.



## Exercise 13

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *There are no \_\_\_\_\_ ways about it.* Students who bully other students have to be punished.
- 2 *You'll feel better after you've had a rest. You'll \_\_\_\_\_!*
- 3 *Don't get me \_\_\_\_\_!* I like having people visit me but just at the moment I'm too busy to have guests.
- 4 *'Jack really loves his little sister.'*  
*'You could have \_\_\_\_\_ me! I just saw him kicking her.'*
- 5 *I had hoped to buy something at the auction but it wasn't my \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*Everything was too expensive.*

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 *'This is really good ice cream, isn't it?'*  
*'\_\_\_\_\_, I'm not very fond of sweet things.'*
- 2 *'I cannot possibly let you drive me all the way home. It's too far.'*  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ . Just put your luggage in the car and we'll be on our way.'*
- 3 *'Don't worry. You will get the job.'*  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ I did very badly at the interview.'*

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *Don't be so sad!* I'm sure you'll find a job soon.
- 2 *The office is closed today.*  
*'For what reason?'*

*Meg and Mary were on their way to work. Meg had a piece of news for Mary.*

'Have you heard the latest?' Meg asked. 'Sara's got the sack.'

'That comes as no surprise,' replied Mary. 'Let's face it, Sara's been behaving very badly for quite a while. She's been coming in late and leaving early and not doing much work when she's in the office. Quite frankly, I'm surprised she hasn't been sacked before.'

Meg said, 'She got away with it for so long because the boss of her department was off sick and the person who took his place was, apparently, rather weak. I heard someone say that he seemed afraid of Sara.'

'I have to go to the same evening class as Sara tonight,' said Mary. 'We're both doing Italian. I've half a mind not to go because she's bound to talk about being sacked. Do you know when she's leaving?'

'Search me!' replied Meg. 'Anna phoned to tell me last night, but she didn't have any of the details. Do they usually tell people to leave right away or do they usually let them stay to the end of the month? I haven't been with the firm very long and so I don't know.'

'Good question,' replied Mary, 'but I don't know the answer. I've been here two years, but I don't remember anyone being sacked before, although quite a few have left.'

'If I were Sara's boss I would want to get rid of her as soon as possible,' said Meg. 'She's quite likely to try and cause trouble. I wouldn't put it past her to say that she's been dismissed unfairly.'

'Neither would I,' said Mary. 'There again, she knows that most of the staff were well aware of how badly she was behaving. Perhaps, she'll go quietly.'

'I hope so, although I don't think it's very likely,' replied Meg as they reached the door of the office and went to their separate departments.

## Useful Expressions

### again

#### there again

You say **there again** when you wish to add something to what you have just said, especially something which is different from or opposite to what you have just said:

- *The food was very good last time we ate there, but **there again** that was about two years ago.*
- *I want to go somewhere that is warm and sunny. **There again**, I don't want it to be too hot.*

#### Language Help

You can also use **then again** in the same way:

- *I suppose Henry might get the job; **then again**, he might not.*

### face

#### let's face it

You say **let's face it** when something unpleasant is obviously true and people should not pretend that it is not:

- ***Let's face it.** My brother is a thief and he stole money from his own family.*
- ***Let's face it**—Bill is very old and cannot look after himself properly any more.*

### frankly

#### quite frankly

You use **quite frankly** to show that you are saying what you really think without trying to be polite or kind:

- ***Quite frankly**, I think Jane's new house is very ugly.*
- ***Quite frankly**, we all thought that Bill behaved very badly and he should apologize.*

#### Language Help

You can also use **to be frank** in this way:

- ***To be frank**, I'm sure that Sue is making a big mistake in marrying Peter.*

### hope

#### I hope so

You say **I hope so** to show that you want something to be true or to happen and think that this is possible, but not definite:

- *'Will they be able to repair your car today?'*  
*'**I hope so**, although the garage is very busy.'*
- *'Do you think we've made enough food for the party?'*  
*'**I hope so**, but I don't know exactly how many people are coming.'*

### latest

#### have you heard the latest?

You say **have you heard the latest?** when you want to know if someone has heard a recent piece of interesting news or gossip:

- ***Have you heard the latest?** Sara is going to marry Anne's ex-boyfriend!*

- **Have you heard the latest?** The boss says that business is very bad and no one will be getting a pay rise this year.
- 'Where shall I put these books?'  
**'Good question!** All the bookshelves are already full.'

## mind

### I've half a mind to (do something)

You say **I've half a mind to** do something when you are considering doing something, although you are not sure that you will:

- *I've half a mind to go away for the weekend, but I have some work to finish.*
- *The boys were so rude to me that I had half a mind to ring their parents and tell them about it.*

## past

### I wouldn't put it past (someone)

You say **I wouldn't put it past** someone when it would not surprise you if they did something bad, unpleasant, etc:

- *I wouldn't put it past Amy to tell lies to the police to protect her boyfriend.*
- *I wouldn't put it past my neighbour to steal some of the plants from my garden.*

## question

### good question

You say **good question** when somebody asks something important to which you do not know the answer:

- *'That's a lovely dress, but how much is it?'*  
**'Good question!** I'll ask the sales assistant.'

## Language Help

You can also use **that's a good question** in the same way.

## search

### search me!

You say **search me!** when you wish to emphasize in an informal way that you do not know the answer to a question:

- *'Why is the shop closed?'*  
**'Search me!** It was open this morning.'
- *'Why did Jack leave so suddenly?'*  
**'Search me!** He didn't say.'

## surprise

### that comes as no surprise

You say **that comes as no surprise** when something that you have expected happens and so you are not at all surprised:

- *So Jack failed the exam. **That comes as no surprise.** He didn't spend much time studying.*
- *I hear that Bob has been arrested for speeding. **That comes as no surprise.** He always drives too fast.*

## Exercise 14

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Apparently Jane's wedding to John didn't take place.'  
'That's not surprising. They were always quarrelling.'
- 2 'Where has Jim gone in such a hurry?'  
'I really don't know. He ran past me without saying anything.'
- 3 Has someone told you the news? Sue and Jack have got engaged.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I wouldn't put it \_\_\_\_\_ Anne to steal money from her parents to give to her boyfriend.
- 2 Let's \_\_\_\_\_ it! There are very few jobs in this area and you're going to have to accept this one.
- 3 'There's central heating in the cottage but how do we turn it on?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ question! I'll see if there are any instructions.'

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 We want a house with a garden. \_\_\_\_\_, we don't want too large a garden.
- 2 'Will you be back at work soon?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_, but it depends on what the doctor says.'

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is similar in meaning to **to be frank** and show how it is used.

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*Ben and Joe were trying to mend the family's lawnmower, which had been making odd noises.*

'Try it now,' said Ben. Joe switched the machine on.

'So far, so good,' said Joe. 'I'm sure it sounds better than it did.'

The two brothers were doing some more work on the machine when their parents came out. Their mother said, 'I think we should have taken the lawnmower to the repair shop. I'm not sure that the boys know what they're doing. They might break it.'

'You know they are both good with machinery,' said her husband. 'They fixed your washing machine last week, didn't they? They'll have the mower mended **before you know it.**'

'Try it again,' called Ben. '**With a bit of luck** it should work now.'

Alas, this time there was no sound at all from the lawnmower when the power was switched on. '**Not to worry,**' said Ben. 'We'll soon find out what the problem is.'

Meanwhile his mother looked anxious and said to her husband. '**What did I tell you?**'

After a bit more work Joe switched the power on again and this time the lawn was working perfectly. '**There you go!**' said Joe. 'Now you can get on with cutting the grass, Dad.'

'Yes, John,' said his wife. '**There's no time like the present.** The grass badly needs cutting and it looks as though it might rain later on.'

Their father asked his sons if they would cut the grass instead of him, but Joe said, 'Sorry, Dad, **I'm not a great one for** gardening and I've other things to do.'

Ben agreed with him. '**That makes two of us.** I like machinery, but not gardening, and I've an essay to write.'

Dad was left to cut the grass, wishing that he had not been quite so keen on getting the mower mended. '**What I'd give for** a pint of beer and a read of the Sunday papers,' he muttered.

## Useful Expressions

### before

#### before you know it

When you say that something will happen **before you know it** you mean that it will happen very soon:

- *It's unfortunate that you have hurt your leg but you'll be walking on it again **before you know it**.*
- *Winter can be a depressing time, but it will be spring again **before you know it**.*

#### Language Help

This expression is often used when you want to make someone feel happier.

### far

#### so far, so good

You say **so far, so good** when you are doing something difficult or risky which has been successful up till now but which you have not yet finished:

- ***So far, so good.** We're halfway up the mountain and the weather is still reasonably clear.*
- ***So far, so good.** We've got the injured man down from the rocks. Now we need to get him to hospital.*

### give

#### what I'd give for ...

You say **what I'd give for** something when you mean that you would like something very much:

- *It's so hot. **What I'd give for** a cold drink!*
- *I'm so tired! **What I'd give for** a holiday!*

### great

#### I'm not a great one for

You say **I'm not a great one for** something or for doing something when you do not like or enjoy it:

- ***I'm not a great one for** beach holidays.*
- ***I'm not a great one for** sweet things.*

### luck

#### with a bit of luck

You say **with a bit of luck** when you hope that you will be fortunate enough for something to happen:

- ***With a bit of luck** we should reach home before midnight.*
- ***With a bit of luck** we'll find a cheap hotel down by the beach.*

### tell

#### what did I tell you?

You say **what did I tell you?** when you have been proved to be right about something, especially when you had warned someone that something bad might happen:

- ***What did I tell you?** I said that Jane couldn't do the job and now she's been sacked.*
- ***What did I tell you?** I warned you that Tom is always late and now he's late for his own wedding.*

### Language Help

The expression **I told you so** has a similar meaning:

- *'It's a lovely hotel, but the food was dreadful.'*  
**'I told you so before you booked! We stayed there last year.'**

### there

#### there you go

You say **there you go** when you are giving something to someone or have done something for someone that they asked you to do:

- **There you go.** *That's the book you ordered.*
- **There you go.** *That's your car cleaned now.*

### time

#### there's no time like the present

You say **there's no time like the present** when you think that it would be best to do something right away:

- *'I really should tidy my bedroom.'*  
**There's no time like the present.** *I'll help you.'*
- *'I've been meaning to have a party but I never seem to get round to organizing one.'*  
**There's no time like the present!** *Why not have it this weekend?'*

### two

#### that makes two of us

You say **that makes two of us** when you are in the same position or situation as someone else:

- *'I've got a bad cold.'*  
**That makes two of us.** *I've been coughing and sneezing all morning.'*
- *'I'd like to buy a new dress but I have very little money left this month.'*  
**That makes two of us.'**

### worry

#### not to worry

You say **not to worry** to someone to tell them that something is not important and does not matter:

- *'I'm sorry I'm late.'*  
**Not to worry!** *The meeting hasn't started yet.'*
- *'I broke one of your cups, I'm afraid.'*  
**Not to worry.** *They're just cheap ones.'*

### Language Help

You can also use **don't worry** in the same way.

The expression **never mind** is used in a similar way:

- *'I've forgotten to get any milk.'*  
**Never mind.** *We can have black coffee.'*



## Exercise 15

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'I can't find the book you wanted to borrow.'  
'It **doesn't matter**. I'll get it some other time.'
- 2 **I would so like** a cup of tea. I'm tired and thirsty.
- 3 The operation won't take long and you'll be out of hospital **very shortly**.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 Ring up and ask for a job now. **There's no** \_\_\_\_\_ **like the present**.
- 2 'I'm so tired of all this cold, wet weather.'  
'**That makes** \_\_\_\_\_ **of us**. I wish I lived somewhere warmer.'
- 3 I don't think I'll come to the cinema with you. **I'm not a** \_\_\_\_\_ **one** **for** science fiction films.
- 4 **So** \_\_\_\_\_ , **so good**. We've done more than half the journey in a very short time. I hope the rest of it will be as quick.

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'I'm sorry but we've run out of petrol.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ I suggested we stopped at the last filling station.'
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ . Two glasses of white wine and one red:
- 3 It's getting quite late, but \_\_\_\_\_ we might find a food shop open.

# 16

## Looking for a tennis partner

*It was a beautiful afternoon for physical activity. So Jane suggested playing tennis.*

'That's an excellent idea,' replied Mark. '**Count me in!**'

'**Me too,**' said Jenny. 'I haven't had a game this summer.'

'Tom's keen on tennis, but I haven't seen him this morning,' said Mark. 'Where is he?'

'He's probably still in bed,' replied Jenny. 'He was at a party last night and I heard that it didn't finish until very late. My brother was there, but he had to go to work this morning and so he didn't stay to the end.'

'You're right about Tom,' said Jane, who was Tom's sister. 'He's still in bed and **I bet** he'll be there for the rest of the day. He certainly won't want to play tennis and we need someone else if we want to play doubles.'

'I saw Jim in the park **just now** as I was coming here,' said Mark. '**Let's** ask him if he'd like to join us. He's **not a bad** tennis player.'

'**Right enough!**' agreed Jane. 'I've seen him playing with Tom and he's quite good.'

'I'd love to play, but **I'm afraid** I can't,' said Jim when they asked him. 'I'm going to a football match this afternoon.'

'**That's too bad,**' said Jenny, 'but perhaps you could play with us some other time.'

Just then Frank appeared and said he'd be delighted to play. They all went home to collect their tennis racquets, having arranged to meet later at the local tennis courts. Just as they finished playing Tom appeared, complaining that they hadn't asked him to play.

'If you wanted to play you should have got up earlier,' said his sister, 'instead of wasting the day lying in bed.'

'**Give me a break,** Jane!' Tom said. 'I was tired and needed the extra sleep.' He then promised to play the following Saturday.

## Useful Expressions

### afraid

#### I'm afraid

You use **I'm afraid** when you are politely telling someone something that may upset or annoy them:

- *I'm afraid you've missed the last train to the city tonight.*
- *I'm afraid that that we cannot repair your computer.*
- *You are not allowed to smoke in the hotel, I'm afraid.*

### bad

#### not a bad ...

You use **not a bad** of someone or something to mean that they are quite good:

- *Jill's not a bad cook and she cooked a delicious dinner last night.*
- *Anne's not a bad singer and she plays the piano as well.*

#### Language Help

You also use **not bad** to mean quite good:

- *The food in the café is not bad and it's very cheap.*

#### that's too bad

You say **that's too bad** when you are referring to something that is unfortunate, often when you are expressing sadness, sympathy or disappointment:

- *'Jane can't come to the party because her mother's ill.'*

*'That's too bad! She was really looking forward to it!'*

- *'Bob's broken his leg playing football and he won't be able to play for the rest of the season.'*  
*'That's too bad! He's just been chosen to play for the first team.'*

#### Language Help

You can also use **that's (just) too bad** when you do not really care about something or do not feel any sympathy:

- *I know that you don't like white bread, but that's just too bad. That's all we have.*
- *'Sue hates travelling by bus.'*  
*'That's too just bad! We can't get there by any other means.'*

### bet

#### I bet

You say **I bet** when you are very sure that something is true or will happen:

- *I bet Jack's late. He always is.*
- *I bet the new manager will sack some of the present staff.*

### break

#### give me a break!

You say **give me a break!** to someone in an informal context when you want them to stop criticizing you or to stop annoying you by doing something or talking about something:

- *'You're very slow! That work should have been finished yesterday.'*

**'Give me a break!** This is a very difficult project.'

- 'Have you mended the shirt yet?'  
**'Give me a break!** I've just got back from work and I'm in the middle of cooking dinner.'

### Language Help

You can also use **give me a break!** in an informal context in reply to what you think is a foolish suggestion or comment:

- 'Isn't Lucy the most beautiful girl you've ever met?'  
**'Give me a break!** She wears a lot of make-up and spends a fortune at the hairdressers, but she's not even pretty!'

## count

### count me in

You say **count me in** when you want to be included in an activity with other people:

- 'We're looking for people to join the choir.'  
**'Count me in!** I like singing.'
- 'Would any of you like to come hill-walking tomorrow?'  
**'Count me in!'**

## let

### let's

You say **let's** when you suggest doing it:

- **Let's** have a barbecue this evening.
- **Let's** stop for lunch soon.

## me

### me too

You say **me too** when you wish to agree with someone or be included in something:

- 'I'm very thirsty.'  
**'Me too!'**
- 'I'd like to go to the cinema.'  
**'Me too!'**

## now

### just now

You say **just now** when you mean a short time ago:

- I saw Peter at the bus stop **just now**.
- I met Sue in the supermarket **just now**.

### Language Help

You can also use **just now** to mean at the present time:

- Jack's in the garden **just now**.

## right

### right enough

You say **right enough** when you are agreeing with someone:

- 'Sue looks a bit like Jack's wife.'  
**'Right enough!** She does.'
- 'It's Sunday and so the city should be reasonably quiet.'  
**'Right enough!'**

## Exercise 16

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 Jill can't have gone overseas yet. I saw her \_\_\_\_\_ in the car park.
- 2 'I'd like a cup of tea.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_! I'll put the kettle on.'
- 3 It's a lovely day. \_\_\_\_\_ take the children to the park.
- 4 I'm going to the beach tomorrow. \_\_\_\_\_ it rains.
- 5 We've ordered the spare part for your car but \_\_\_\_\_ it won't arrive till the end of the week.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 Give me a \_\_\_\_\_, Anne, and stop asking me when I'll finish your dance dress. The dance isn't for three months yet and the dress will be ready long before then.
- 2 'We're thinking of putting on a school Christmas play this year. Anyone interested?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ me in! I love acting.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Anne always seems to be dressed in black.'  
'True. She does.'
- 2 You should get Sue to give you dance lessons. She's quite a good teacher.
- 3 'I'm sorry but I can't come to dinner tonight. I have a bad cold.'  
'That's unfortunate. I hope you get better soon.'

*Liz had just arrived at the sports club for a committee meeting which was being held to discuss the Christmas party. She found the meeting room very cold.*

'Is it just me, or is it very cold in here?' asked Liz.

Just then, Martin came in to the room, saying, 'Good heavens! It's cold in here. Is the heating on?'

John, who had been the first to arrive, said, 'The radiators were on when I got here, but I've just checked and they're cold now. No wonder you're all feeling cold. I'll call the caretaker.'

John phoned the caretaker, who came immediately, saying, 'It's probably the boiler. It's not been working properly recently. I may have to call in a central heating engineer.'

As the caretaker went away to look at the boiler, Meg said, 'He'll be lucky! Our central heating system broke down about a week ago and I still haven't found a firm that'll send anyone to mend it. They say they're very busy because of the very cold weather and because it's so close to Christmas.'

When the caretaker came back John asked, 'Any luck?' The caretaker replied, 'No, it's the boiler. I can't fix it and the people who usually look after it say that they can't look at it till next week. The thing is it's their busiest time of year.'

'It'll be the same with all the other firms in town,' said Jean. 'And the Christmas party is tomorrow night! What a shame!'

'I could ask my dad to look at it,' said Liz. 'He was a central heating engineer before he retired two years ago.'

'Great!' said Martin and the others all agreed it was a good idea.

Liz went to get her father, who said, 'All right! I'll get my tools and have a look at it, but don't get your hopes up! It might be too big a job for me.'

Fortunately, Liz's father was able to mend the boiler. Everyone was very grateful to him and the Christmas party was able to take place as planned.

## Useful Expressions

### great!

You say **great!** when you are very pleased about something:

- *'I can give you a lift to the match tomorrow night, if you want.'*  
**'Great! Thanks a lot!'**
- *'We would like to offer you the job.'*  
**'Great! When can I start?'**

#### Language Help

You can also use **great!** ironically to mean that you are not at all pleased about something:

- **Great!** *It's raining heavily and I don't have an umbrella.*

### heaven

#### good heavens!

You use **good heavens!** when you are very surprised, shocked or annoyed by something:

- **Good heavens!** *What was that terrible noise!*
- **Good heavens!** *I didn't recognize you with blonde hair.*

#### Language Help

You can use **heavens!** in the same way:

- **Heavens!** *I must run! The bakery will be closed in a few minutes.*

### hope

#### don't get your hopes up

You say **don't get your hopes up** when you are warning someone not to be very hopeful or optimistic:

- *I'll see if I can get you a ticket for the concert, but **don't get your hopes up**. There were very few left yesterday.*
- *Dad might lend you the money for your trip but **don't get your hopes up**. His business isn't doing very well just now.*

### luck

#### any luck?

You say **any luck?** when you want to find out if someone has been successful at something:

- *'I've been looking for my lost keys.'*  
**'Any luck?'**
- *'I've been trying to find a flat to rent.'*  
**'Any luck?'**

### lucky

#### he'll be lucky!

You say **he'll (you'll, they'll, etc) be lucky!** when you think that someone is very unlikely to get something that they want:

- *'Sue is hoping to go to university.'*  
**'She'll be lucky! She failed most of her exams last year.'**
- *'Bill is hoping to get a large salary increase.'*  
**'He'll be lucky! Sales have been very bad and the firm is in financial trouble.'**

## me

### is it just me?

You say **is it just me?** when you want to know if it is only you who feels or thinks something or if others do so too:

- *Is it just me or is there a smell of burning in here?*
- *Is it just me or has it got very hot in this room?*

## right

### all right

You use **all right** when you wish to say 'yes' to something that someone has asked you:

- *'Will you lend me your bike, please?'*  
*'All right, but I'll need it back tomorrow.'*
- *'Come round to my house just after breakfast.'*  
*'All right!'*

## shame

### what a shame!

You say **what a shame!** when something bad, unfortunate or disappointing happens:

- *What a shame! Sue couldn't go to her sister's wedding because she had flu.*

- *What a shame! They've had to cancel the children's trip to the beach because of bad weather.*

## thing

### the thing is

You use **the thing is** to introduce an explanation, often an excuse or reason for something not happening or being done:

- *I couldn't get here in time for the meeting.*  
*The thing is I had a dental appointment.*
- *Bill won't be at the party.* *The thing is he's not feeling very well.*

## wonder

### no wonder

You say **no wonder** when you think that something is not at all surprising in the circumstances:

- *No wonder your father is angry. You borrowed his car without permission and then crashed it.*
- *'Anne's upset.'*  
*'No wonder. She has just discovered that her boyfriend has been going out with another girl.'*



## Exercise 17

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Tom seems very depressed.'  
'That's not surprising. He's just heard that he failed all his exams.'
- 2 'I've spent the day interviewing child minders.'  
'Any success?'
- 3 Tom might lend you his holiday cottage next week, but don't be too optimistic. I haven't asked him yet and he may have already lent it to some other friends.

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'Would you be very kind and look after the children for me this evening?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_, but you'll have to be home before midnight.'
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ It's snowing and it's the middle of May!
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Meg's baby was late and her mother had to go back to New York without seeing her grandson.
- 4 'The bank has decided to lend you the money to start your business.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ When will the money be available?'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'Bob is going to ask the boss for some extra holiday this year.'  
'He'll be \_\_\_\_\_ ! We're so busy at the moment that the boss is trying to persuade people not to take any holiday at all.'
- 2 Could you possibly lend me some money to pay the cab driver? The \_\_\_\_\_ is, I've left my wallet in my other jacket.
- 3 Is it \_\_\_\_\_ me or is this roll of wallpaper a slightly different colour from the one we've just put on the wall?

*Mrs Blair's birthday was drawing near and her husband and their two daughters were discussing how to celebrate it.*

'Why don't we have a surprise party for Mum on her birthday?' asked Jane. 'We'll ask all her friends—the more the merrier. I'm sure she'd love that.'

'I suppose so,' said her sister Diana doubtfully, 'but remember that Mum's very shy when there's a lot of people around. What do you think, Dad?'

'I think it's a good idea to have a party and, if we have a surprise one, it means that Mum won't have to organize it,' said her father, Mr Blair. 'Still, you're right about her being shy. Perhaps we could have a smaller party than you were thinking of—just family and a few of Mum's closest friends?'

'On second thoughts, I think Mum would prefer something smaller,' said Jane. 'She doesn't really like crowds of people. Let's get started on the planning.'

'All in good time,' said her father. 'There's no hurry. Mum's birthday's not till next month. We should wait and discuss it with the boys. They haven't come back from football practice yet, but they should be here soon. We don't want them to feel that we've left them out of the organizing.'

'Since when have Jack and Ron been interested in organizing anything?' laughed Diana. 'They'll turn up for the party and that's it. They won't want to do any of the work. If you ask them to, they'll say that they're very busy doing something else.'

'That's a bit unfair,' said Mr Blair. 'I'm sure they'll want to do their share.'

'That's what you think, Dad!' said Jane. 'Jack and Ron avoid doing their share of work whenever possible. When did they last help with dinner, for instance?'

'Ask me another!' said Mr Blair. 'We must make sure that they help with the party, then. We should make a list of jobs and share them out. I'll start on that now and we'll get together after dinner when your mother's gone out.'

## Useful Expressions

### ask

#### ask me another!

You say **ask me another!** when somebody asks you a question that you cannot answer or know nothing about:

- 'Why has Bill decided to leave his job?'  
'**Ask me another!** I thought he liked working there.'
- 'Where has Jill gone?'  
'**Ask me another!** She told me that she would be at home all morning.'

#### Language Help

The expression **don't ask me!** is used in a similar way:

- 'Why was the burglar alarm not on this morning?'  
'**Don't ask me!** I switched it on when I went to bed last night.'

### hurry

#### there's no hurry

You tell someone that **there's no hurry** when they do not need to do something or go somewhere very quickly or very soon:

- You can return the book to me when you have read it. **There's no hurry.**
- **There's no hurry.** The train does not leave until 10.30.

### more

#### the more the merrier

The more people that are involved in an occasion the better or more enjoyable it will be:

- Certainly you can bring a friend to the party. **The more the merrier.**
- We'd like as many people as possible to help decorate the hall for the party. **The more the merrier.**

### second

#### on second thoughts

You say **on second thoughts** when you change a choice or decision:

- I'll go by bus. No, **on second thoughts** I'll take the train. It'll be quicker.
- I'd like a glass of red wine, please. No, **on second thoughts** I'll have a glass of white.

### since

#### since when?

You use **since when?** when you are surprised or annoyed at something:

- This bill must be wrong. **Since when** has a glass of mineral water cost \$20?
- I told Jack that he was making a mistake but **since when** did he ever take my advice?

### suppose

#### I suppose so

You say **I suppose so** when you are agreeing with someone, but rather unwillingly:

- 'Will it be all right if I borrow your car?'  
'**I suppose so, but be careful with it.**'

- 'We can give you a table in the restaurant at 9 o'clock. Is that all right?'  
'I **suppose so**, but we'd rather eat earlier.'

### that and that's it

You say **and that's it** when something is definitely finished or decided:

- Jim and Anna have decided to separate **and that's it**.
- The committee has rejected the decision **and that's it**.

### think that's what you think

You use **that's what you think** when you tell someone that they are wrong about something:

- 'Sally seems a very nice child.'  
'**That's what you think**. She bullies the other children in the nursery when there are no adults present.'
- 'At least it will be dry and sunny there just now.'  
'**That's what you think**. I was there two years ago at this time of year and it rained most of the time.'

### time all in good time

You say **all in good time** when you are telling someone to be patient because what they want to be done need not be done right away:

- 'We haven't sent out the party invitations yet.'  
'**All in good time**. The party's not until next month.'
- 'We should start cooking dinner now.'  
'**All in good time**. Our guests are not coming until 8 o'clock and we want the food to be fresh.'

### why why don't we?

You use **why don't we**, (**you**, etc) to make suggestions:

- **Why don't you** borrow my bike?
- **Why don't they** have lunch with us?

#### Language Help

The expression **why not?** is used in a similar way:

- **Why not** come to the party with us?

## Exercise 18

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 We want as many children as possible to take part in the school play.  
*The more the \_\_\_\_\_.*
- 2 I'll take the children with me to visit Anne in hospital. No, *on second \_\_\_\_\_* I'll leave them with my mother. They might tire Anne.
- 3 'Can we put the Christmas decorations up soon?'  
*'All in \_\_\_\_\_ time. It's two weeks until Christmas.'*
- 4 'Bill says that he is in charge of the office.'  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ when? The boss always leaves me in charge.'*

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Bill must be very wealthy.'  
*'You're quite wrong. He spends a great deal of money but he has huge debts.'*
- 2 'I'll read this book right away and return it to you.'  
*'You don't have to rush. I'm not likely to need it.'*

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 It's a lovely day. \_\_\_\_\_ eat outside in the garden.
- 2 The jury has found John guilty \_\_\_\_\_. He has no grounds for appeal.
- 3 'The baby will be perfectly all right with the childminder.'  
*'\_\_\_\_\_, but I'm not happy leaving him when he's not very well.'*

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is similar in meaning to **don't ask me!** and show how it is used.

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*Jenny wanted to know a particular football result. It would tell her whether her father was in a good mood or bad.*

'Do you know if Ramsden Rovers won today?' Jenny asked Frank.

'I've no idea,' replied Frank. 'I couldn't care less about football results. I'm only interested in rugby and cricket. Are you keen on football?'

'Certainly not!' replied Jenny. 'I think it's a boring game. It's just that I want to ask my dad for something and he'll be in a bad mood if his team loses. If Ramsden Rovers haven't won I'll know not to ask him tonight. There's Tim over there. Do you think he might know the result of the football match?'

'Hardly,' answered Frank. 'Tim's not interested in any form of sport. He spends all his time studying.'

'I'll ask him, anyhow,' said Jenny. 'I really need to know.'

'Suit yourself!' said Frank, 'but I have to go now. I hope you find out the result.'

Frank was right about Tim not knowing the result, but he said, 'Just a minute and I'll ring my brother on my mobile. He'll know.' When Tim switched off his phone he said, 'My brother said that Rovers won.'

'Thanks a lot, Tim!' said Jenny and hurried off to find her father. She wanted to ask him to pay for her to go on rather an expensive school trip overseas. She was feeling rather nervous and this must have shown on her face because her father asked, 'What's the matter with you, Jenny?'

Jenny told him about the trip and explained how much it was. She was surprised when he said, 'Sure, you can go! It's all part of your education and that's important.'

Jenny thanked her father very much. She was rather surprised, and very relieved, that there had been no argument. Usually, her father complained a lot about the cost of things, but today he had not. 'That's because Ramsden Rovers won!' said Jenny, and went to ring Mary, her best friend, to find out if she was being allowed to go on the school trip.

## Useful Expressions

### care

#### I couldn't care less

You use **I couldn't care less** when something is not at all important to you and you are not worried about it. It is a more informal and less polite way of saying **I don't care**:

- *I couldn't care less* whether John comes to the party or not.
- *My sister says that she doesn't like this dress, but I couldn't care less. She knows nothing about fashion.*

### certainly

#### certainly not!

You use **certainly not!** as a stronger way of saying 'no' in answer to a question:

- 'Are you going to give up work now you are 60?'  
'**Certainly not!** I'm fit and healthy and well able to work.'
- 'Did you lend Jack your car?'  
'**Certainly not!** He is a very bad driver.'

### hardly

You say **hardly** when something seems very unlikely or unreasonable to you:

- 'Will Sara be at Meg's wedding?'  
'**Hardly!** She used to be engaged to the groom.'
- 'Will we reach the hotel before dinner?'  
'**Hardly!** We've still 150 kilometres to go.'

### idea

#### I've no idea

You say **I've no idea** when you wish to emphasize that you do not know the answer to something:

- 'Where has Jim gone?'  
'**I've no idea.** He left without saying anything.'
- **I've no idea** why Ben and Tom quarrelled. They've always been such good friends.

### just

#### it's just that

You say **it's just that** when you are giving a reason for something or explaining something:

- *I'd like to go to the wedding. **It's just that** I have to work that day.*
- *I know I said that I would finish the work by this afternoon. **It's just that** it is taking much longer than I thought it would.*

### matter

#### what's the matter?

You say **what's the matter?** when you ask why someone is upset, angry, etc:

- *Jane is crying. **What's the matter** with her?*
- **What's the matter** with Ben? He's just left the house looking furious.

## minute

### just a minute

You say **just a minute** when you want someone to wait for a very short time:

- 'Can you give me Pat's phone number?'  
**'Just a minute** and I'll look it up in my address book.'
- 'Do you know where Ken's new house is?'  
**'Just a minute** and I'll ask my son. He's a friend of Ken's daughter.'

## suit

### suit yourself!

You say **suit yourself!** in an angry way to tell someone that they can do what they want even though that is not what you want:

- **Suit yourself!** *You can stay longer at the party if you like, but I'm going home now!*
- 'I don't really want to go to the cinema this evening.'  
**'Suit yourself!** *I'll go by myself then!*

## sure!

You say **sure!** to someone as an informal way of saying 'yes' or 'certainly':

- 'Can I borrow your magazine?'  
**'Sure!'**
- 'Would you pass me an apple, please?'  
**'Sure! Here's one.'**

## thank

### thanks a lot

You say **thanks a lot** to someone to show that you are very grateful to them:

- **Thanks a lot** *for lending me your bike.*
- 'You can have some of these sandwiches, if you like.'  
**'Thanks a lot.'**



## Exercise 19

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'You can use my phone if you want.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ . That's kind of you.'
- 2 'Could I have another piece of cake?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_! Help yourself.'
- 3 'Is Jim likely to retire soon?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ He's not even 50 yet. He's much younger than he looks.'

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *What's wrong with* Jill? She seems very sad.
- 2 'Do you think you were wrong to sack your secretary?'  
'*No!* She was guilty of dishonesty and theft.'
- 3 'Where did Dad leave the car?'  
'*I really don't know.* I wasn't with him when he parked it.'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'This hotel doesn't look very comfortable. I think we should look for another one.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ *yourself!* I'm very tired and I'm going to ask for a room here.'
- 2 'Could you lend me a telephone directory, please?'  
'*Just a* \_\_\_\_\_ . It's in my study upstairs.'
- 3 I wouldn't usually go to the college library in the evening. *It's* \_\_\_\_\_ *that* I have an essay to write which requires a lot of research.

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is similar in meaning to **I don't care** and show how it is used.

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*Harry and his two sisters, Carol and Jane, were discussing what to buy for their father's birthday.*

'There's no doubt about it,' said Carol. 'A book would be the best thing.'

'That's true,' replied Harry. 'The only trouble is that we don't know which books Dad's read already.'

'I know for a fact that he hasn't read the new James Ryan,' said Jane. 'I heard him saying this morning that he had tried to get it out of the library but that they didn't have it. He said that he would wait for it to come out in paperback, but we could get him the hardback as a present, don't you think?'

All three agreed that this was a good idea and Jane offered to go and buy it.

Just as she was leaving, she heard her brother call, 'Hang on, Jane! I'll just get my jacket and come with you. I need to get some books for college.'

On the way to the bookshop Jane said, 'What if we meet Dad in the shop? He goes there a lot, you know, and he might guess that we're there to get his present. Or will he be watching the cricket match?'

'I expect so,' said Harry, 'but, just in case, I'll go in to the shop first. If he is there, he'll think I'm there to get my college books. If I don't come back out in a few minutes you'll know it's safe to come in.'

'Right you are!' said Jane, and waited at the other side of the street while her brother went into the shop. When he did not come out, she also went into the shop and bought the book.

'What an excellent choice!' said their father when he received the present. 'I shall really look forward to reading this.'

## Useful Expressions

### case

#### just in case

You say **just in case** when you refer to something that might happen which you want to be prepared for:

- *I think you should ring the doorbell again, **just in case** Meg didn't hear you the first time.*
- *I'm going to take an umbrella, **just in case** it rains.*

#### Language Help

The expression **in case** also has this meaning:

- *I'll give you a door key **in case** I'm out when you return.*

### doubt

#### there's no doubt about it

You use **there's no doubt about it** before or after saying something which you are certain is true:

- ***There's no doubt about it.** Jim did steal the car. The police stopped him when he was driving it.*
- *Sara's the best student in the class. **There's no doubt about it.** She has got top marks in most subjects throughout her school career.*

### expect

#### I expect so

You say **I expect so** in reply to a question when you think that something is probably true:

- *'Do you think Bill will get the job?'*  
*'**I expect so.** He has the best qualifications.'*
- *'Will you be home in time for dinner?'*  
*'**I expect so—**unless the train is very late.'*

### hang

#### hang on!

You use **hang on!** to ask someone to wait for you:

- ***Hang on!** I'll drive you to the airport. I'll get my car keys.*
- ***Hang on!** I'll open the door for you. You have such a lot of luggage.*

### know

#### I know for a fact

You use **I know for a fact** when you wish to emphasize how sure you are that something is true:

- ***I know for a fact** that Jim was lying when he said that.*
- ***I know for a fact** that Ben is still married.*

#### you know

You use **you know** in this way to emphasize the importance of what you are saying:

- *Pete can easily afford to buy the house. He's a millionaire, **you know.***
- *Sara is often ill. She has something wrong with her heart, **you know.***

### Language Help

You also use **you know** when you are trying to explain something to someone, often when you are checking that they know the person or thing that you are talking about:

- *He lives in that little white cottage at the bottom of the hill—**you know**, the one that Anne Jones used to live in.*
- *Jane is married to Tom Blair the actor—**you know**, the man who played Hamlet in the local theatre's last production.*

Some people use **you know** rather meaninglessly when they are trying to think of what to say next or when they are having difficulty in finding the right word or words:

- *I don't really like Sara, but I feel that I should, **you know**, admire her.*
- *Jim's not a doctor, but he's employed in the health service as some kind of, **you know**, administrator.*

### right

#### right you are!

You say **right you are!** when you agree to do as someone has suggested or ordered:

- *'Plant the rose bushes in a sunny place in the garden.'*  
**'Right you are!'**
- *'We would like two black coffees, please.'*  
**'Right you are!'**

### think

#### don't you think?

You say **don't you think?** when you wish to ask if someone has the same opinion or idea

about something as you, usually assuming that they do:

- *This is an interesting menu, **don't you think?***
- *Tom has decorated his flat very well, **don't you think?***

### trouble

#### the only trouble is

You use **the only trouble is** when you refer to a problem or difficulty connected with something that is otherwise all right, acceptable, suitable, etc:

- *The cottage would make an ideal holiday home. **The only trouble is** that it's a bit small for our large family.*
- *I've been offered a very good job. **The only trouble is** that I would have to move house if I accept it.*

### Language Help

The expression is sometimes shortened to **the trouble is**.

### what

#### what if?

You say **what if?** when you wish to refer to something, especially something bad, that might happen:

- ***What if** we miss that train? There isn't another one until next morning.*
- *Anne has been accepted by the local university to study English if she passes her exams, but **what if** she fails?*

## Exercise 20

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'Don't worry. Sue will get a taxi home if she misses the last bus.'  
'But \_\_\_\_\_ she doesn't have enough money for a taxi?'
- 2 Meg cannot possibly take on a full-time job. She looks after her three small children and her elderly mother, \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ If you're going to the supermarket I'll come with you.
- 4 'Will Jack still be at work?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_. He usually works late on Thursdays.'

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'I find it difficult to believe that Bob's been arrested by the police.'  
'It's **quite true**. I saw the arrest myself.'
- 2 She seems the best person for the job. **Wouldn't you agree?**
- 3 'Would you put the books back in my office, please?'  
'**OK!** I'll do that right away.'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I would love to accept my sister's invitation to visit her in Australia this month. **The only** \_\_\_\_\_ **is** that I'm exceptionally busy at work just now.
- 2 Sue says that she resigned from her job but **I know** \_\_\_\_\_ **a fact** that she was sacked.
- 3 I think that Jim will remember to come to the meeting, but I'll ring to remind him, **just in** \_\_\_\_\_.

**D** You can use **you know** to emphasize the importance of what you are saying. In what other situation can you use the expression?

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*Mary was extremely upset that Joan had invited Lucy to go to the cinema with them.*

'Why on earth did you ask Lucy, of all people, to come to the cinema with us?' Mary asked Joan. 'You know that we all dislike her. I don't want her to come and I'm sure that the others won't want her company, either.'

'She was standing next to Beth and Jill when I asked them,' replied Joan. 'I felt that I couldn't very well not invite her. It seemed such a rude thing to do and she seems very lonely. She's always on her own whenever I see her.'

'Listen, Joan!' said Mary. 'If Lucy's lonely it's her own fault. She's always so unfriendly to everyone. It's not surprising that she doesn't have any friends.'

'Lucy can come,' said Jill. 'That's OK with me. She seems unfriendly, but maybe she's just shy.'

'And that's fine by me,' said Beth. 'She hasn't lived here very long. It always takes some time to settle into a new place. I didn't know many people for quite a long time when I first came here. She may be nicer when we get to know her. Perhaps we should wait and see.'

'Look!' said Mary angrily, 'It's no use defending her. She's a really nasty person. She was really horrible to me when she first arrived and she's been horrible to me ever since.'

'Perhaps you said or did something to upset her,' suggested Jill. 'What happened when you first met her? Did you have an argument?'

'No, we didn't,' said Mary. 'She just started being unpleasant to me for no reason and if she's going to the cinema, I'm not.'

'Fair enough,' said Joan, 'if that's how you feel, but we can't possibly ask her not to come now. That would be very rude. Are you sure you won't change your mind? It's supposed to be a good film.'

Mary refused to change her mind and missed a very good film.

## Useful Expressions

### all

#### of all people

You use **of all people** when you wish to say how unlikely, unexpected, unsuitable, etc, it is that someone has done something, is involved in something, etc:

- *It is shocking that the child's mother, **of all people**, has treated him so badly.*
- *Anne is terribly upset that Jane, **of all people**, said such nasty things about her. She thought she was her best friend.*

### couldn't

#### I couldn't very well

You say **I couldn't very well** do something when it does not seem fair or right to do so:

- *I had to ask her to dance. **I couldn't very well** leave her standing there on her own.*
- *Sue's my sister. **I couldn't very well** not ask her to my birthday party, even if my flat mates dislike her.*

### earth

#### why on earth?

You say **why on earth?** when you are very annoyed, surprised or puzzled by something:

- ***Why on earth** did the boy not tell his parents he was being bullied at school?*
- ***Why on earth** did Jim not report the burglary to the police?*

#### Language Help

**How on earth?, What on earth?, Who on earth?** are used in a similar way:

- ***Who on earth** made that mess?*

### fair

#### fair enough

You say **fair enough** when you think that a suggestion seems reasonable or acceptable:

- *'Pete is going to take us all in his car to the meeting but he suggests that we share the cost of the petrol.'*  
**'Fair enough!'**
- *'You can stay in my flat while I'm away if you look after my cats.'*  
**'Fair enough!'**

### fine

#### that's fine by me

You say **that's fine by me** when you agree to something which has been suggested:

- *'We could go to the Friday night performance of the play.'*  
**'That's fine by me.'**
- *'We can fly to Australia via Singapore.'*  
**'That's fine by me!'**

#### Language Help

The expression **that's OK with me** has the same meaning, although it is used in a more informal context:

- *'It might be a good idea to set off very early in the morning.'*  
**'That's OK with me!'**
- *'Do you mind if we offer to give Anne a lift to the party?'*  
**'That's OK with me. There's plenty of room in the car.'**

## listen!

You say **listen!** when you want to get someone to pay attention to what you are going to say and often when you are annoyed with them:

- **Listen!** *I'm not going to lend you any more money. You'll have to get a job.*
- **Listen!** *You're going to have to stop your dog from barking all night or I'm going to complain to the landlord.*

## look!

You say **look!** when want someone to pay attention to what you are going to say and often when you are annoyed with them:

- **Look!** *I've told you that I don't want you here. Get out!*
- **Look!** *We're going to be late if we don't leave now.*

## use

### it's no use

You say **it's no use** when you think there is no purpose or value in doing something as it will not have any effect:

- **It's no use** asking Ben to help. He's very busy just now.
- **It's no use** ringing the office today. It's closed on Saturdays.

### Language Help

The expressions **it isn't any use** and **what's the use?** are used in the same way:

- **What's the use** of worrying about the exam? It's over and you can't do anything about it now.

## wait

### wait and see

You use **wait and see** when you are telling someone that they must wait patiently to find out what will happen:

- *'Do you think my birthday present from Dad will arrive tomorrow?'*  
*'You'll just have to **wait and see.**'*
- *'Will there be champagne at the party?'*  
*'**Wait and see!**'*



## Exercise 21

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 'What do you think Granny will give me for Christmas?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_'. She wants it to be a surprise.'
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ I've waited as long as I can for you. I'm going to have to go and you'll have to take the bus.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ I don't want to hear any more of your complaints. If you don't like living here you can go.

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'We can borrow Anne's holiday cottage for a couple of weeks if we tidy up the garden for her.'  
'That's *reasonable*. Let's accept her offer.'
- 2 *There's no point in* asking Sue to look after the children tonight. I heard her say that she's going out for dinner.

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *Why on* \_\_\_\_\_ did Jim lie to the police when he hadn't done anything wrong?
- 2 We simply cannot believe that the local doctor, *of* \_\_\_\_\_ *people*, is the murderer.
- 3 *I* \_\_\_\_\_ *very well* refuse to give Jim a lift home. He had missed the last bus.

**D** Write down two idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning and show how one of them is used.

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## 22

## Fixing a dental appointment

*Mrs Brown had just walked into her dentist's surgery. She stopped at the receptionist's desk.*

She said, 'I was wondering whether I could change the date of my next appointment.'

'Of course, Mrs Brown,' said the dentist's receptionist. 'I'll check the appointments diary for you and find a date that suits you. I can offer you the same day the following week at 11 am.'

'That's no good, I'm afraid,' replied Mrs Brown. 'I'm going to my daughter's school concert then.'

'Then there's Friday of that same week at 4 pm,' said the receptionist.

'Sorry!' said Mrs Brown. 'I can't come then either. I'm going away for the weekend.'

'The next date I can give you is June 23 at 9.30 am,' said the receptionist. 'That's about a month after your original appointment, but it's not urgent, is it?'

'No, it's just a routine check-up, but I can't come then either. Oh dear! I'm being a nuisance and taking up a great deal of your time trying to find a suitable date.'

'That's what I'm here for, Mrs Brown,' said the receptionist politely and once again looked at the appointments diary. 'June 30 at 10 am?' she asked.

'As far as I know, I can come then,' replied Mrs Brown, 'but it's the day before we go on holiday. I'll have to check with my husband in case he wants to leave the day before. I'll give you a ring when I've spoken to him. Perhaps a date in July would be better. Thank you for your help.'

'Speaking of July,' said the receptionist to her colleague when Mrs Brown had gone. 'Mr Lewis told me this morning that he's going on holiday in July.'

'Well, at least you got rid of her,' said her colleague.

'Some hope!' replied the receptionist. 'She'll be on the phone shortly.'

Just then the phone rang and it was Mrs Brown.

## Useful Expressions

### course

#### of course

You use **of course** instead of 'yes' for emphasis:

- 'Can I use your phone?'  
'**Of course!**'
- 'Will there be someone there to look after the children?'  
'**Of course!**'

#### Language Help

You also use **of course** when you mention something that you think is generally known:

- **Of course**, his wife died many years ago.

### dear

#### oh dear!

You say **oh dear!** when you are sad, upset or disappointed about something:

- **Oh dear!** I've forgotten my shopping list.
- **Oh dear!** The cat has killed a bird.

### good

#### that's no good

You say **that's no good** when you mean that something is not acceptable, suitable or convenient:

- 'We have a one-bedroom holiday flat left.'  
'**That's no good**, unfortunately. There's my wife and myself and two children.'
- 'We have no tickets left for this evening's performance, but I can give you two for tomorrow evening.'

'Thanks, but **that's no good**. We're leaving tomorrow morning.'

### hope

#### some hope!

You say **some hope!** when you think that there is no chance of something happening:

- 'Bill should be here soon.'  
'**Some hope!** Bill is always last to arrive.'
- 'I hope that we'll be able to find somewhere nice to stay in the town.'  
'**Some hope!** It's the middle of the tourist season and the town is even busier than usual this summer.'

### is it?

You use **is it?** as a short question after a negative statement asking for confirmation of what you have just said:

- The dog's not badly hurt, **is it?**
- This isn't the London train, **is it?**

### know

#### as far as I know

You use **as far as I know** when you think you know something but are not completely sure because you might not know all the facts:

- **As far as I know**, Jack still lives in Victoria Street, but I suppose he could have moved house recently.
- **As far as I know**, there is a restaurant next to the theatre, but I haven't been in that part of the city for quite a long time.

## ring

### I'll give you (him, them, etc) a ring

You say **I'll give you a ring** when you tell someone in an informal way that you are going to telephone them:

- **I'll give you a ring** when I know the date of the meeting.
- **Give me a ring** when you arrive at the airport.

## sorry!

You say **sorry!** when you wish to apologize to someone for something you have done:

- **Sorry!** I'm later than I said I would be.
- **Sorry!** I've spilt some wine on your table cloth.

### Language Help

You say **sorry!** when you ask someone to repeat what they have said because you did not hear it clearly:

- **Sorry!** Could you repeat that phone number for me?
- **Sorry!** Did you say her name was Anne or Anna?

You also use **sorry!** when you wish to say 'no' in a polite way:

- 'Do you have any French bread?'  
'**Sorry!** We've none left today.'
- 'Are dogs allowed in the hotel?'  
'**Sorry,** they're not.'

## speak

### speaking of

You say **speaking of** when you wish to say more about someone or something that has just been mentioned:

- *I hear that Jim won the golf competition. **Speaking of** Jim, I haven't seen him for a long time.*
- *Pam's daughter has decided to study drama. **Speaking of** drama, have you seen the new play at the King's Theatre?*

### Language Help

**Talking of** can be used in the same way:

- *I hear that Sam was injured in a football match. **Talking of** the match, who won?*

## wonder

### I was wondering whether

You use **I was wondering whether** as a polite way of asking somebody something:

- **I was wondering whether** I might borrow one of your cookery books?
- **I was wondering whether** you know of any flats to rent in the area?

### Language Help

You can also use **I was wondering if** in the same way:

- **We were wondering if** you would like to come to the cinema with us?

## Exercise 22

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ I can't find my car keys. I wonder where I left them.
- 2 'Can we book a table for dinner? We're staying in the hotel tonight.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_. What time would you like to eat?'
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ I took your coat by mistake. Here it is.
- 4 The washing machine isn't broken again, \_\_\_\_\_

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I was \_\_\_\_\_ if there's a bus due soon.
- 2 As \_\_\_\_\_ as I know, Sue is still teaching at the university, but I haven't been in touch with her for quite a long time.
- 3 'Presumably you will be moving into your new house soon.'  
'Some \_\_\_\_\_! The builders haven't nearly finished work on it yet.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 I'll **telephone you** when your order is ready.
- 2 'The first available flight gets into Paris at 11 o'clock.'  
'That's **not suitable**. I have a meeting at 10 o'clock.'

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which means the same as **talking of** and show how it is used.

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*Mark, his sister Sue and some friends were driving to the country in a minivan to spend a few days with his parents in their holiday cottage.*

'How about stopping for lunch, soon?' said Mark. 'I'm very hungry. I didn't have any breakfast.'

'It serves you right,' said Sue. 'If you'd got out of bed when I called you, you would've had time for breakfast.'

'I'd like to stop soon, too,' said Jill. 'It would be good to get some fresh air.'

'Are you feeling ill?' asked Amy.

'I'm fine, but I sometimes get car sick, if I stay in a car too long,' said Jill.

'You'd better get out of the van as soon as possible then,' replied Amy.

'There's a good, inexpensive little restaurant at Millhill,' said Mark, who was driving. 'It's not far off the motorway and it's much better than the places on the motorway.'

'I hate to tell you,' replied Ben, 'but we've just passed the exit for Millhill.'

Mark said, 'I think we can get to it from the next exit.' He was right and soon they had arrived at the Millhill restaurant.

Jill said that she would just have a glass of water, but Amy tried to persuade her to eat. 'At least have a salad,' she suggested.

'No, thanks,' said Jill, 'but could I have some of your bread?'

'Be my guest!' replied Amy. 'Take as much as you like.'

After they had all eaten, John said, 'Come on! We should get back on the road again. We want to get to the cottage before dinner.'

'I must say that we've made better progress than I thought we would,' said Mark. 'The traffic's been surprisingly light.'

It was now Ben's turn to drive. His sister Amy said, 'Please don't drive too fast, Ben. You usually do.'

'No fear!' replied Ben. 'In fact, I'll probably drive very slowly because I'm not used to driving this van.'

They arrived safely at the cottage in the late afternoon and Mark's parents were very pleased to see them.

## Useful Expressions

### better

#### had ('d) better

You say that someone **had better** do something when you are telling them what you think they ought to do:

- You'd **better** go by train. *It's much quicker than the bus.*
- The doctor is not here yet. You'd **better** come in and wait for him.
- They'd **better** make reservations at the restaurant. *It is always very busy.*

#### Language Help

You use **had best** in the same way:

- You'd **best** avoid the mountain road. *It's blocked with snow.*

### come

#### come on!

You say **come on!** when you want someone to hurry or to do something:

- **Come on!** *We'll have to walk faster if we want to reach the town before dark.*
- **Come on!** *You're late! The others have already started working.*

### fact

#### in fact

You use **in fact** when you are saying what the truth about a situation is, this often being the opposite of what has just been mentioned or suggested:

- 'Bob was late as usual, I suppose.'  
'No, he wasn't. **In fact**, Bob has become very punctual since he met Mary.'

- 'I assume the food in that restaurant is very expensive.'  
'No, **in fact** it was quite reasonably priced. We were quite surprised.'

#### Language Help

Another form of this expression with the same meaning is **in actual fact**:

- 'Presumably you booked tickets for the concert some time ago.'  
'No, **in actual fact** I only booked them yesterday.'

You also use the expression **in fact** and the expression **in actual fact** when you wish to add a piece of information, often something which you think is interesting or surprising, to what you have just said:

- I know quite a lot about local history. **In fact**, I've written some articles on it for the local newspaper.
- My mother knows Lucy quite well. **In fact**, they attended the same school.

The expression **as a matter of fact** is used in similar ways. (See page 3.)

### fear

#### no fear!

You use **no fear!** in informal contexts in answer to a question to show that you are definitely not going to do something or that something is not going to happen:

- 'Are you going sailing this afternoon?'  
'**No fear!** There's going to be a storm.'
- 'Is Jack coming climbing with us?'  
'**No fear!** He's scared of heights.'

## fine

### I'm fine

You say **I'm fine**, often in answer to a question, when you are feeling healthy or well:

- *'I hear that you have been ill. How do you feel now?'*  
*'I'm fine, thanks.'*
- *'Are you feeling ill? You look rather pale.'*  
*'I'm fine, thanks.'*

### Language Help

The expression is often shortened to **fine**:

- *'How are you today?'*  
*'Fine, thanks.'*

## guest

### be my guest

You say **be my guest** as a way of telling someone that they may take or use something that belongs to you:

- *'Could I borrow your pen to fill out this form?'*  
*'Be my guest!'*
- *'Those cakes look delicious. Can I have one, please?'*  
*'Certainly, be my guest.'*

## how

### how about?

You say **how about?** to suggest something to someone:

- **How about** going to the cinema this evening?
- It's very hot. **How about** a cold drink?

### Language Help

You use **what about?** in the same way:

- **What about** taking a trip to the beach?

## say

### I must say

You use **I must say** when you wish to emphasize what you think or how you feel:

- *I must say* that it's a very good film.
- *I must say* that I was very annoyed at his behaviour.

## serve

### it serves you right

You say **it serves you right** to someone when you think that they deserve something bad that has happened to them:

- *I hear that Lucy has left you. It serves you right* because you always treated her so badly.
- *Bob told me that the police stopped you for speeding. It serves you right.* You always drive too fast.

## tell

### I hate to tell you

You use **I hate to tell you** when you are telling someone something that they are not going to like to hear:

- *I hate to tell you*, but the last bus has just gone.
- *I hate to tell you*, but your neighbour's dog has just dug up the plants in your front garden.



## Exercise 23

Answer the following questions.

**A** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *It \_\_\_\_\_ you right that the principal punished you for taking the afternoon off. You've played truant several times this term.*
- 2 *I \_\_\_\_\_ to tell you but the landlord is putting the rents up again.*
- 3 *I \_\_\_\_\_ say that that was an excellent meal.*
- 4 *'Could I use your computer to check my emails?'  
'Be my \_\_\_\_\_! My office is over there.'*

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *What about going to visit my parents this weekend?*
- 2 *'I know you had flu quite badly. Have you quite recovered?'  
'Yes. I'm well.'*
- 3 *'I suppose the course was very boring.'  
'No. In actual fact, it was extremely interesting.'*

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ We're going to miss the train if we don't hurry.
- 2 *'Are you going to lend Jim your bike?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ He broke it the last time I lent it to him.'*
- 3 We \_\_\_\_\_ stay here tonight. There's a storm forecast.

*Bill and Harry were trying to get Bill's car to go. He had bought it only a few days ago, but it was already causing problems. The situation was made worse by the fact that Bill's younger brother, George, kept annoying them.*

'That old thing's never going to go,' said George. 'How much did you pay for it?'

'**Mind your own business!**' said Bill angrily. 'We're trying to work here.'

Harry said, 'Try starting it now, Bill. That **might have done the trick!**'

'**No such luck!**' replied Bill, as the engine failed to start once again.

'**I can't imagine** why you ever bought the thing,' said George. 'You wasted your money.'

'Go away, George!' said Bill. 'You're beginning to make me really angry.'

Meanwhile, Harry said, looking at a car manual, '**I know!** I think it might be a minor electrical fault.' He bent over the engine again and soon said, '**Fingers crossed!** I'll try to start it now. **Here goes!**'

'**Some hope!**' said George, but then they all heard the noise of the engine.

'It's going!' said Bill excitedly. '**Well done,** Harry! Let's go for a drive.'

'That's a good idea,' said Harry. 'We'll see how the car goes on the road. I'll go and wash my hands and get my coat.'

As Harry went into the house, George said to his brother, 'I'm glad Harry got the car going. It'll be nice to go for a drive. I'll get my jacket. It's in my room.'

'**Beat it!**' said Bill. 'You're not coming with us. You've been rude and unhelpful all morning and you're staying here.'

George was very disappointed. However, since Bill still looked very angry, he decided not to argue with him. He went off to find his friends, instead. Bill and Harry drove off, hoping that the car would not break down again.

## Useful Expressions

### beat it!

A rather rude, slang expression used when you want someone to go away immediately:

- **Beat it!** *I'm not lending you any money.*
- **Beat it or I'll call the police!**

### business

#### mind your own business!

Rather a rude informal expression which you use when you want to tell someone that something is private and that you do not want them to know about it or interfere in it:

- 'How much of a salary rise did you get?'  
**'Mind your own business!'**
- 'What did the boss say in his memo to you?'  
**'Mind your own business!'**

#### Language Help

The phrase **it's none of your business** has a similar meaning:

- 'Are you going to ask Pam out tonight?'  
**'Why do you ask? It's none of your business.'**

### finger

#### fingers crossed!

You say **fingers crossed!** when you hope that something happens in the way that you want it to:

- *I'm being interviewed for a new job this morning. **Fingers crossed!***
- *I think I have a good chance of winning the competition. **Fingers crossed!***

### go

#### here goes!

You say **here goes!** when you are about to do something risky, important, exciting, etc:

- **Here goes!** *I've never ridden a motorbike before and I'm a bit nervous.*
- *I promised my son that I would go windsurfing with him. **Here goes!***

### hope

#### some hope!

You use **some hope!** when you wish to say that you think that there is no chance of something happening:

- 'Jack thinks that some of the shops in the town might still be open.'  
**'Some hope!** *It's 6.30 and they close at 5.30.'*
- 'Sara and Anne are looking for a flat near the university.'  
**'Some hope!** *All of them were rented right at the beginning of term. They're too late.'*

### imagine

#### I can't imagine

You say **I can't imagine** to show that something surprises you very much and you don't understand it:

- **I can't imagine** *why Amy married Jack. They are completely different from each other.*
- *They're planning to visit Tom's parents, but I can't imagine how they think they'll get there. They don't have a car and there's no public transport to that part of the world.*

## know

### I know

You use **I know** when you have just had an idea or wish to make a suggestion:

- *'It's a holiday weekend. We really ought to do something interesting.'*  
**'I know, let's hire a boat.'**
- *'We'll have to do something to raise money for the children's charity.'*  
**'I know, let's organize a race and get people to sponsor the runners.'**

## luck

### no such luck

You say **no such luck** to express disappointment that something has not happened:

- *'Did you get the job?'*  
**'No such luck! I didn't even get an interview!'**
- *We were hoping that it would be a sunny day when we went to the seaside, but **no such luck!** It rained all day.*

## trick

### do the trick

You say that something **has done the trick** when it works or is successful in what you were trying to do:

- *The baby wouldn't sleep but I sang her a lullaby and that **did the trick.***
- *We couldn't think how to amuse the children, but we took them to the seaside and that **did the trick.***

## well

### well done!

You say **well done!** when you are congratulating someone on being successful at something:

- *I hear you passed all your exams. **Well done!***
- *Your cake has won first prize. **Well done!***

## Exercise 24

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 *That's a fine picture you've painted.* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ *I'm trying to study and you're disturbing me.*
- 3 *I'm going to have to try to rescue the cat from the tree although I'm afraid of heights.* \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 *'I'd like to do something interesting for Mum and Dad's wedding anniversary.'*  
*'\_\_\_\_\_, let's cook them a nice meal.'*

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 *'You're on holiday next week. Are you going abroad?'*  
*'No \_\_\_\_\_! I've no money and so I'm staying at home.'*
- 2 *'The garden gate makes a terrible noise when you open it.'*  
*'Put some oil on it. That should \_\_\_\_\_ **the trick**.'*
- 3 *'Why is Dad so angry with you?'*  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ **your own business!**'*
- 4 *I'm just going to ask the boss for a pay increase. \_\_\_\_\_ **crossed!***

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 *'Do you think we'll catch the last ferry to the island?'*  
*'**There's no chance**. The traffic's too heavy.'*
- 2 ***I just don't understand** why Sue left her job. It was very interesting and well paid.*

*Mary had been thinking of working during her university vacation.*

'Have you decided what you're going to do in the vacation?' her mother asked.

'I need to earn some money. I **thought I'd** try to find a job looking after children. It should be reasonably easy to find one.'

'I **can't think why** you would want to do that,' said her sister Sara. 'Childcare jobs are badly paid and a lot of children are very noisy and badly behaved. You should look for a job that would be more fun.'

'Don't forget that the parents can be very difficult,' said their elder sister Pat. 'They'll blame you if anything goes wrong, whether or not it was your fault. And they often come back late without paying you any extra money. I certainly wouldn't look after children.'

'What do you think, Mum?' Mary asked her mother, who had been listening to her daughters' comments.

'**By all means** get a job looking after children, if that's what you really want to do. Pat and Sara are right, **though**. It's not an easy job and you don't have any experience of looking after children. Childminding is a very tiring job with a great deal of responsibility. **Having said that**, it can be very interesting and I **dare say** that you might enjoy it. Have you any other ideas?'

'**Not really**. I **don't think much of** any of the jobs I've seen advertised,' said Mary, going off to think about the problem.

Next day her mother said, '**By the way**, Mary, are you going to look for a childminding job or not?'

'No, Mum,' replied Mary. 'I meant to tell you earlier. I've been offered a job in the office of the local computer factory and it's quite well paid. I've decided to take that. I start on Monday.'

'**Good!** I think that's the right decision,' said her mother. 'Now tell me about the job in the computer factory. That sounds as though it might be quite interesting.'

## Useful Expressions

### dare

#### I dare say

You say **I dare say** when you mean that something is probable or likely:

- *I **dare say** that she thinks that she's doing the right thing.*
- *I **dare say** that Anne will find a job eventually.*

### good!

You say **good!** when you think that something is acceptable or suitable:

- *We can deliver your new furniture on Friday.'*  
**'Good!'**
- *'The book which you ordered has arrived.'*  
**'Good! I'll collect it this afternoon.'**

### means

#### by all means

You say **by all means** when you are willing for someone to do something or have something or as an emphatic way of saying 'yes':

- ***By all means** take Friday off to go to your sister's wedding.*
- ***By all means** borrow my car when I'm on holiday.*

### really

#### not really

You use **not really** as a way of saying 'no' or 'not very much' to a question or suggestion:

- *'Did you enjoy your holiday?'*  
**'Not really. It rained most of the time.'**

- *'Was the talk interesting?'*  
**'Not really. The speaker had nothing new to say.'**

### say

#### having said that

You say **having said that** before adding something that makes what you have just said less strong:

- *He does not have enough experience to do the job properly. **Having said that**, I think that he will work hard and learn quickly.*
- *I don't like Jane's new boyfriend very much but, **having said that**, I notice that he treats her very well.*

### think

#### I can't think why

You say **I can't think why** to emphasize that you do not understand something:

- ***I can't think why** Jim continues to live in that small, dark flat when he could afford something much better.*
- ***I can't think why** Sara is going to live in the country. She has always loved city life.*

#### I don't think much of

You say **I don't think much of** someone or something when you do not think that someone or something is very good:

- *Tom recommended this restaurant, but **I don't think much of it**.*
- ***I don't think much of** our team's new goalkeeper. The other side has scored two goals already.*

## I thought I'd

You say **I thought I'd** do something when you tell someone what you plan to do:

- *I thought I'd make some cakes for tea.*
- *I thought I'd take a walk before lunch.*

### Language Help

You use **I think I'll** in a similar way:

- *I think I'll go to the cinema this evening.*

## though

You say **though** at the end of a sentence to make the previous statement less strong or less important:

- *It rained on the day of the barbecue. Everyone had a good time, **though**.*

- *We moved here recently and don't know many people. We'd like to make some friends soon, **though**.*

## way by the way

You say **by the way** when you mention something which is not directly connected with what has just been said or something which you have just remembered:

- *We went to the zoo yesterday. **By the way**, one of the elephants there died recently.*
- *I've just been down to the local bookshop. **By the way**, I noticed that it has a copy of that travel book you wanted.*



## Exercise 25

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Do you enjoy your present job?'  
'**Not very much**. I just do it for the money.'
- 2 'Would it be all right if I borrowed this book for my essay?'  
'**Yes, certainly**—and you might find this one helpful, too.'
- 3 **I really don't understand why** Meg turned down the job she was offered. It's a far better job than the one she has at the moment.

**B** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ take a shower before dinner. I feel hot and tired after the journey and a shower will refresh me.
- 2 The Smiths haven't lived here very long. They take part in all the village activities, \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 'The hotel porter will park your car for you.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ Here are the car keys.'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I saw Meg yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_ **the way**, she sent you her best wishes.
- 2 **I don't think** \_\_\_\_\_ **of** this hotel. The food is poor and the service is terrible.
- 3 I don't think we'd go back to that resort again. **Having** \_\_\_\_\_ **that**, it's a very good holiday place if you have young children.
- 4 I \_\_\_\_\_ **say** Meg will decide what she wants to do eventually, but at the moment she has no idea.

*John was in his front garden when he saw his wife, Anne, coming down the street carrying several plastic bags full of shopping. He immediately went to the gate to open it and meet her.*

Before he could reach it, she called, 'Help! I'm going to drop some of these bags soon. **Can you** come and carry some?'

As John hurried towards his wife, he suddenly saw their neighbour's cat run in front of her. 'Watch out!' he called to her, but he was too late. Anne had tripped over the cat and had fallen. She had dropped the bags as she fell and the shopping was all over the pavement.

John helped Anne to get to her feet, making sure that she could walk. When she began to pick up the shopping, he said, 'Let me do that. You go home and rest.'

'At least none of the shopping is damaged,' said Anne when they got home. 'I'll have to start cooking soon. Jim and Beth and George and Jill are coming to dinner.'

John noticed that she could not use her right arm properly and said, 'With all due respect, Anne, you cannot cook with such a sore arm. I'll ring and cancel the dinner party. When I explain they'll understand.'

When Anne said that she had been looking forward to the dinner party and did not really want to cancel it, John said, 'I'll prepare the meal, then. I can cook steaks. There's nothing to it. You can sit in the kitchen and give me instructions.'

John was rather slow at cooking at first and Anne said, 'At this rate we will be eating at midnight. Would you like some help?'

However, John politely refused. He said that the meal would be ready before the guests arrived and it was. Everyone, including Anne, congratulated him on producing such a delicious meal. 'You should cook more often,' said Anne.

## Useful Expressions

### can

#### can you?

You use **can you?** when you want to ask someone to do something:

- **Can you** lend me a pen?
- **Can you** tell me where the station is?

#### help!

An exclamation which you use when you are in danger or in need of assistance:

- **'Help!'** called the boy as the boat began to sink.
- **Help!** The door is stuck and I can't get out.

### least

#### at least

You use **at least** when you wish to suggest that a situation is not as bad as it might have been or to say something positive about a bad or negative situation:

- *It rained on the day of the wedding, but **at least** it was dry when the photographs were being taken.*
- *It's not a very nice flat, but **at least** it's warm.*

#### Language Help

You also use **at least** to suggest the smallest thing that should be done, even if nothing else is done:

- *You may dislike her, but you should **at least** admit that she's a good worker.*

You also use **at least** when you wish to change something which you have just said, often in order to make your statement less definite:

- *It's my favourite restaurant, **at least** my favourite local one.*

### let

#### let me

You say **let me** do something when you are offering to help somebody:

- **Let me** carry those books for you.
- **Let me** call a taxi for you.

### like

#### would you like ...?

You say **would you like (something)?** when you offer it to somebody:

- **Would you like** some tea?
- **Would you like** a biscuit?

### nothing

#### there's nothing to it

You say **there's nothing to it** when you think that something is very easy to do:

- *I can mend the washing machine for you. **There's nothing to it.***
- *I can teach you to use the computer. **There's nothing to it.***

## rate

### at this rate

You say **at this rate** to suggest what is going to happen if things continue to develop or progress in the same way as at present:

- *The traffic is very bad. **At this rate** we won't get there before dark.*
- *The builders have made very little progress this week. **At this rate** the house will certainly not be finished before Christmas.*

## respect

### with all due respect

You use **with all due respect** in a formal context when you disagree with what somebody has just said:

- ***With all due respect**, I think that your statement is not quite accurate.*
- ***With all due respect**, I feel that you are not telling the whole truth.*

#### Language Help

The expression **with respect** is used in a similar way:

- ***With respect**, there are better ways of doing this.*

## then

You say **then** when you wish to show that what you are saying is related in some way to something that has been said before:

- *You say that you do not want the job. Why did you apply for it **then**?*
- *There's no public transport to the area and we don't have a car. How are we going to get there **then**?*

## watch

### watch out!

You say **watch out!** to warn people of possible danger or difficulty:

- ***Watch out!** The floor is wet and you might slip.*
- ***Watch out!** He's got a gun!*

#### Language Help

The expression **mind out!** has the same meaning:

- ***Mind out!** The tree is falling in your direction!*

## Exercise 26

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ hold the baby for you while you get into the car.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ look after the children for a couple of hours this afternoon?
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ I've lost my key somewhere in these bushes. Would you help me look?
- 4 'I'm not really hungry.'  
'Why did you order a sandwich \_\_\_\_\_?'
- 5 Our holiday hotel wasn't very comfortable, but \_\_\_\_\_, it was clean and cheap.
- 6 It's a very hot day. \_\_\_\_\_ a cold drink?

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I never have any time to sew in the evenings. **At this** \_\_\_\_\_ I'll never finish my dress in time for the dance.
- 2 You'll easily be able to work the new telephone system. \_\_\_\_\_ **nothing to it**.
- 3 **With all** \_\_\_\_\_ **respect**, that is not what I said.

**C** Write down an expression from the passage which has the same meaning as **mind out!** and show how it is used.

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*Pam had been looking after her younger brother and sisters while their parents were away in America.*

'Jack, it's 9.30,' Pam called to her younger brother in the next room.

'So what?' came the reply.

'Mr Brown said that the bus was leaving for the football match at 10 o'clock,' said Pam.

'So?' Jack called rather rudely.

'You'll miss the bus if you don't leave in the next few minutes and you're supposed to be playing in the team,' said Pam.

'It's none of your business!' Jack called again.

Their next door neighbour, Mrs Harris, had come round to borrow a cook book and was in the kitchen with Pam. 'If you don't mind my saying so, Pam,' she said, 'you should not let Jack be so rude to you. Tell me, when do your parents get back?'

'They're due back any day now and I can't wait. Jack has been badly behaved all the time they've been away. I really can't cope with him any longer.'

Pam and Jack's parents had gone overseas on a short trip. Their father had some business in America and their mother had taken the opportunity to go with him. Pam, who was nineteen, had offered to look after her younger brother and sisters so that her mother could go. She had regretted it almost immediately. Her twin sisters, Lucy and Amy, who were ten, had not caused any problems, but Jack had caused a lot of them. Thanks to him, Pam had had a very worrying time when their parents were away.

Having got the book which she wanted, Mrs Harris said, 'I'll leave you to it, then. I'm sorry that you are having such a bad time with Jack. I hope that you tell your parents about it as soon as they get back.'

'You bet I will!' said Pam, going off to look for Jack. He wasn't in the house. Pam saw that his football kit wasn't in the hall. 'He must have changed his mind about playing in the match,' she said to herself.

## Useful Expressions

### bet

#### you bet!

You say **you bet!** to show that you definitely intend to do what has just been said:

- 'Enjoy tonight's party!'  
'**You bet** I will!'
- 'Will you be at the football match on Saturday?'  
'**You bet!**'

#### Language Help

You also use **you bet!** to emphasize what has just been said or to mean 'certainly':

- 'It seems to have been a good party.'  
'**You bet!**'

### business

#### it's none of your business

You say **it's none of your business** to tell someone that something is private and that they have no right to know about it or be interested in it:

- 'How much did you pay for your new house?'  
'**It's none of your business.**'
- 'Why do you hate Anne so much?'  
'**It's none of your business.**'

#### Language Help

The phrase **mind your own business!** has a similar meaning.

### day

#### any day now

You use **any day now** to mean very soon:

- 'When is Anne's baby due?'  
'**Any day now.**'
- I should hear if I've got the job or not **any day now.**

### leave

#### I'll leave you to it

You say **I'll leave you to it** to someone when you are going away to let them do something and not disturb them:

- I can see you're in the midst of cooking dinner. **I'll leave you to it.**
- This is the part of the garden which I want dug. **I'll leave you to it.**

### mind

#### if you don't mind my saying so

You say **if you don't mind my saying so** when you are going to say something that criticizes or that is likely to upset someone:

- **If you don't mind my saying so**, I think that you have made a big mistake.
- **If you don't mind my saying so**, I feel that you treated the children too harshly.

#### Language Help

An alternative form of this is **if you don't mind me saying so**.

## so so?

You use **so?** as a rude reply when you think what has just been said is not important, relevant or interesting, especially when you think that you are being criticized in some way:

- *'The meeting has already started.'*  
**'So?'**
- *'I was going to sit at that table.'*  
**'So?'**

### Language Help

The expression **so what?** is used in the same way.

## so what?

You use **so what?** as a rude reply when you think what has just been said is not important, relevant or interesting, especially when you think that you are being criticized in some way:

- *'You're later than you said you would be.'*  
**'So what?'**
- *'Your new girlfriend seems a lot younger than you.'*  
**'So what?'**

### Language Help

The expression **so?** is used in the same way.

## tell tell me

You say **tell me** to introduce a question:

- **Tell me**, what did you think of the film?
- **Tell me**, can you recommend a good, inexpensive restaurant in the town?

## thank thanks to

You say **thanks to** in this way to mean 'because of':

- **Thanks to** training hard, all the members of the football team are very fit.
- **Thanks to** Tom's bad behaviour at the party, we were all asked to leave.

### Language Help

The expression **no thanks to** means without the help of someone or something or in spite of someone or something:

- **We got the work finished on time, no thanks to** Jack, who did very little.

## wait I can't wait

You say **I can't wait** for something when you want it to happen very much and are excited about it:

- *'When do you go on holiday?'*  
**'Next month and I can't wait!'**
- *I move into my new flat next week. I can't wait!'*



## Exercise 27

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'When do you leave for America?'  
'*Very soon*. I'm just waiting for my visa to arrive.'
- 2 The picnic was rather a miserable affair *because of* the heavy rain.
- 3 Here is a list of the things I want you to do today. *I'll let you get on*.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 I'm starting my new job next month and I \_\_\_\_\_ *wait!*
- 2 *If you don't* \_\_\_\_\_ *my saying so*, I feel that you don't pay enough attention to your work.
- 3 'Try and forget about work when you're on holiday.'  
'*You* \_\_\_\_\_ *I will!*'

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_, where can I get a room for the night in the village?
- 2 'How much do you spend on clothes every month?'  
'\_\_\_\_\_.'

**D** There are two expressions in the passage which are used in a similar way. Write these down and show how one of them is used.

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*Bob and Lucy were trying to decide where to go on holiday.*

'I'm not bothered where we go,' said Bob, 'as long as I get a rest. We've been so busy at work that I feel completely exhausted. I'm not sure that I've got the energy to go anywhere. Perhaps we should stay at home this year.'

'You must be joking!' replied Lucy. 'I've been busy at work, too, but I need to get away. I'll pick up some brochures from the travel agent's on my way home tomorrow, if you like.'

'Fair enough,' said Bob. 'Perhaps looking at the brochures will make me more enthusiastic.'

Lucy went to the travel agent's during her lunch hour and collected some brochures. When they began looking at the brochures that evening Lucy said, 'There are so many places that I'd like to go that it's difficult to choose. It would be wonderful to go on a trip to the Caribbean.'

'No doubt it would,' said Bob, 'but we'll have to go somewhere much nearer home. We can't afford to travel very far.'

Lucy replied, 'I wish we didn't always have to think about money. I'd like to be extravagant for once.'

'That's just not possible,' replied Bob. 'Like it or not, we have to be careful about what we spend. Most of our salaries goes on daily living.'

'I know what you mean,' said Lucy. 'We spend most of our money on rent, food and transport to work. It's just as well that neither of us has any debts left over from our student days. Now then, let's start talking about holidays instead of depressing ourselves by talking about money.'

They then spent the rest of the evening looking through holiday brochures and arguing about the advantages and disadvantages of various places. Eventually, they reached a decision. Next day Lucy went to the travel agent's and booked the holiday.

## Useful Expressions

### bothered

#### I'm not bothered

You use **I'm not bothered** in this way to show that something is not important to you and so you do not mind what happens or what is decided:

- 'Would you prefer to eat here or go out for a meal?'  
'**I'm not bothered.** You decide.'
- 'Would you like to go to the cinema?'  
'**I'm not bothered,** but I'll come with you if you want to go.'

#### Language Help

The expression **I'm easy** has a similar meaning:

- 'Would you like to go for a walk or play tennis?'  
'**I'm easy.**'

### doubt

#### no doubt

You use **no doubt** to say that you think something is likely or almost certain:

- **No doubt** Jack will be late as usual.
- 'That shop has some beautiful clothes.'  
'**No doubt** it has, but they will be far too expensive for me.'

### fair

#### fair enough

You say **fair enough** to show that you think that a suggestion or idea is reasonable or acceptable:

- 'I could meet you tomorrow night, but not tonight.'  
'**Fair enough.** I'll see you then.'
- 'I'd like to come to the party, but I can't get there until quite late.'  
'**Fair enough.** Come when you like.'

### joke

#### you must be joking

You say **you must be joking** when someone says something that you think is ridiculous or very unlikely:

- 'Is it true that you're going to marry Bob?'  
'**You must be joking!** I stopped going out with him last year and I haven't spoken to him since then.'
- 'You should try on that dress. I'm sure it would suit you.'  
'**You must be joking.** It costs more than my monthly salary.'

#### Language Help

Another form of this expression is **you're joking, of course!**

### like

#### if you like

You say **if you like** when you are suggesting something or when you are offering to do something:

- Jill's having a party. We could go to it **if you like.**

- 'I've just missed the bus.'  
'I'll take you to the railway station in my car if you like.'

### like it or not

You say **like it or not** to someone to indicate that something will happen even if they disagree or disapprove:

- **Like it or not**, you will have to stay at school until the end of term.
- **Like it or not**, we're going to have to move to a smaller house.

#### Language Help

Another form of this expression is **whether we (you, they, etc) like it or not**:

- **Whether you like it or not**, you're going to have to work on Saturdays.

### mean

#### I know what you mean

You say **I know what you mean** when you understand or agree with what somebody is telling you because you have had similar feelings or experiences:

- 'I felt sick when I went to take my driving test.'  
'**I know what you mean**. I was so nervous that my hands wouldn't stop shaking.'
- 'I seem to spend all my time studying.'  
'**I know what you mean**. I never have any time to see my friends or enjoy myself.'

### now

#### now then

You say **now then** when you are trying to attract someone's attention to what you are going to say or suggest:

- **Now then**, who is responsible for this mess?
- **Now then**, would any of you like tickets for tonight's concert?

### once

#### for once

You say **for once** when you mean that it is unusual for something to happen, often suggesting that it should happen more often:

- We were hoping that the train would be on time **for once**.
- **For once** Jane was able to have some free time without her children.

### well

#### it's just as well

You say **it's just as well** that something has happened when it is good or lucky that it happened in the way that it did:

- **It's just as well** that you didn't come to the meeting because it was cancelled.
- **It's just as well** that you decided to go by train. The traffic was very heavy, and you would have missed the wedding if you had gone by car.

## Exercise 28

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 Dad is usually too busy to play tennis with us, but \_\_\_\_\_ he was able to play today.
- 2 Tom and I are going to the cinema tonight. You can come with us, \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 '\_\_\_\_\_', said the policeman, 'which of you broke the shop window?'

**B** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Would you prefer to stop for lunch now or later?'  
'I **don't mind**. I never eat much for lunch anyway.'
- 2 **It's certain** Bob will insist on paying for dinner. He's a very generous man.
- 3 'I would invite you to stay with me, but I have other guests staying just now.'  
**That's OK**. I'll find a small hotel near by.'

**C** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 **It's** \_\_\_\_\_ **as well** we didn't arrange to go to the theatre last night. I had to work late at the office.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ **it or not**, you're going to have to spend less money on clothes. You're in far too much debt already.
- 3 'John is always very nice, but somehow I don't trust him.'  
'I **know what you** \_\_\_\_\_. He acts as though he has something to hide.'

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which has the same meaning as **you're joking, of course!** and use it in a sentence.

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*Jack, Tom, Sara and Jane were playing tennis when Jane suddenly fell over.*

When she tried to stand up, she said, 'Ouch! My left ankle hurts. I'm going to have to stop playing. I'll just call my dad to come and get me.'

'As a matter of fact, I've got my dad's car today,' said Jack. 'I'll drive you to the hospital.'

'That's kind of you, Jack, but I know you have a lot of things to do this afternoon. I can easily ring my father.'

'Nonsense!' said Jack. 'It's no bother and you should get a doctor to look at that ankle as soon as possible.'

Jack went off to get the car and Jane once again tried to stand on her left leg. It was very painful, but she said that she thought she would be able to get to the car, if she went very slowly.

'Don't you dare! You might damage your ankle if you try to walk on it,' said Sara. 'Tom, you and Jack could carry Jane to the car, couldn't you?'

'Sure,' said Tom. By this time Jack had parked the car and the two boys carried their injured friend over to it. They set off for the hospital.

They all knew where the hospital was, but, when they got there, Jack said, 'I don't know where the casualty department is.'

'Me neither,' said Sara. 'Touch wood! I've never had to go there. I'll get out and ask someone for directions.'

While they waited for Jane to see a doctor in the casualty department, Tom said, 'Does anyone want a coffee or anything? I'm going to the hospital shop.'

When he got back Jane had been told that her ankle wasn't broken, but that she had sprained it badly. Jane's mother was there, too. She said, 'I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for looking after Jane so well.'

## Useful Expressions

### anything or anything

You use **or anything** to refer to or ask about other things of a similar type:

- *It's very hot. Would you like a glass of lemonade **or anything**?*
- *The rooms are very bare. There are no pictures **or anything**.*

#### Language Help

This expression is used in negative statements or questions.

### bother it's no bother

You say **it's no bother** to express that you are happy to help someone:

- *I'll look after the baby this afternoon. **It's no bother**.*
- *'It'll take up a lot of your time to help me with the garden.'*  
*'**It's no bother**. I like gardening.'*

### dare don't you dare!

You say **don't you dare!** to someone when you are emphasizing to them that they must not do something that they have said that they are going to do:

- *'I'm going to tell Mum that you were late for school today.'*  
*'**Don't you dare!**'*

- *'I thought I might borrow your mobile.'*  
*'**Don't you dare!** You should buy one of your own.'*

#### Language Help

Another expression with the same meaning as this is **just you dare!**:

- *'I'm going to tell the teacher that she's forgotten to give us homework.'*  
*'**Just you dare!**'*

### fact as a matter of fact

You say **as a matter of fact** when you wish to add a piece of information, often something which you think is interesting or surprising, to what you have just said:

- *It's a beautiful part of the world. **As a matter of fact**, my parents go there every summer.*
- *I've decided to go to Anne's wedding. **As a matter of fact**, I've already bought a new dress for it.*

#### Language Help

You also use **as a matter of fact** when you are saying what the truth about a situation is, this often being the opposite of what has just been mentioned or suggested:

- *'I suppose it rained a lot when you were on holiday.'*  
*'No, **as a matter of fact** it hardly rained at all. Most days were warm and sunny.'*

The expressions **in fact** and **in actual fact** are used in similar ways.

## neither

### me neither

You use **me neither** to indicate that a negative statement which has just been made also applies to you:

- 'I don't eat meat.'  
'**Me neither.**'
- 'I don't go to the theatre very often.'  
'**Me neither.**'

#### Language Help

The opposite of this expression is **me too**:

- 'I love Indian food.'  
'**Me too.**'

## nonsense!

You say **nonsense!** when you wish to tell someone that a statement which they have made is untrue, ridiculous or foolish:

- 'This dress is too tight.'  
'**Nonsense!** It fits you very well.'
- 'I'm sure that I'm going to fail this English exam.'  
'**Nonsense!** English is your best subject and you've studied hard for the exam.'

## ouch!

You say **ouch!** when you suddenly feel pain:

- **Ouch!** I've been stung by a bee.
- **Ouch!** You stood on my foot!

## sure

You sometimes use **sure** to mean 'yes, certainly' in informal contexts:

- 'Would you open the window, please?'  
'**Sure!**'
- 'Could I borrow your magazine?'  
'**Sure!** Here it is!'

#### Language Help

This expression comes from American English.

## tell

### I can't tell

You say **I can't tell** to show that you are having difficulty expressing your feelings in words:

- **I can't tell** how pleased we are that you are going to marry John.
- **I can't tell** how scared I was when the lights went out.

## wood

### touch wood!

You say **touch wood!** before or after you have made a statement that tells that you have been lucky in some way in order to show that you want your good luck to continue:

- **Touch wood!** I've never been unemployed.
- I've never broken any bones. **Touch wood!**



## Exercise 29

Answer the following questions.

**A** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ I've stepped on something sharp.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ how pleased I am to be home.
- 3 'I don't think I'm ever going to get a good job.'  
'\_\_\_\_\_ You've got excellent qualifications. You just have to keep trying.'
- 4 Their back garden is just a patch of grass. There are no flowers \_\_\_\_\_.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ *wood!* I've never been ill on holiday.
- 2 I see my sister quite often. *As a \_\_\_\_\_ of fact* she is coming to stay with me next week.
- 3 'I'm going to ask Dad if I can borrow the car this weekend.'  
'*Don't you \_\_\_\_\_* I want to borrow it. You had it last weekend.'

**C** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 'Could you possibly give me a lift home?'  
'Yes, *certainly!* I'll go and get my car keys.'
- 2 'I feel bad about asking you to help me prepare the food for the party.'  
'*It's no trouble.* I love cooking and I'm happy to help.'

**D** Write down an expression from the passage which is opposite in meaning to **me too!** and show how it is used.

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*George and his friends each had their problems studying for their coming examinations.*

'The exams start next week and I haven't done any geography revision yet,' said George. 'I'm going to ask Mike if I can borrow his notes for the weekend.'

Mike had come into the room while George was speaking. 'Forget it, George!' he said. 'I'm going to revise geography this weekend and I'll need my notes.'

'You can borrow mine, George,' said Bill, 'if I can borrow your biology notes.'

'It's a deal,' replied George. 'I'll go and get them.'

'Why is George so worried about geography?' asked Anne. 'I mean it's his best subject and he usually comes top of the class in it.'

'Perhaps he wants to study it at university,' said Bill. 'At any rate, I know he wants to do well in it. He's worried because he missed some classes earlier in the year.'

'Are you going to study all weekend, Anne?' asked Meg.

'That depends,' replied Anne. 'I ought to, but I promised to babysit for our neighbour. I'll only be able to study if the children are quiet.'

'I'm taking the weekend off,' said Meg.

'Really?' said Amy. 'But it's so near the exams.'

'I don't care. I need a break from studying and my parents agree with me,' replied Meg. 'I get so tired that I can't concentrate. What's more, I'm not sleeping well.'

'I think we all feel like that. I'm going to ask my parents if I can take some time off this weekend, but they'll say no—at least, I think they will,' said Amy.

Just then George appeared with his biology notes, saying, 'There you are, Bill. I'll get the geography notes from you this evening.'

Then they all went home. Amy's parents agreed with her that she needed a rest. She and Meg went to the cinema that evening while the others studied.

## Useful Expressions

### care

#### I don't care

You use **I don't care** when something is not at all important to you and you are not worried about it:

- 'Has John gone away?'  
'I don't know and I **don't care**.'
- I don't like this job and I **don't care** if the boss sacks me.

#### Language Help

**I couldn't care less** is a more informal, less polite, way of saying this.

### deal

#### it's a deal

You say **it's a deal** when you reach an agreement, especially a business agreement, with someone, having accepted the terms or conditions:

- 'Will you accept \$3000 for the car if I pay you in cash?'  
'**It's a deal!**'
- 'I'll dig your garden for you if you'll lend me your car this evening.'  
'**It's a deal!**'

#### Language Help

The American English expression **it's a done deal** has the same meaning.

### depend

#### that depends (also it depends)

You say **that depends** when you are not yet certain, or have not yet decided, about

something because you need more information:

- 'Are you going on holiday with your family?'  
'**That depends**. I may not be able to get away from work.'
- I'm not sure when we will arrive. **It depends** on the traffic.

### forget

#### forget it

You say **forget it** when you wish to emphasize, in an informal, and not very polite, way the fact that you are saying 'no':

- 'I'd like to take a week's holiday at the end of next month.'  
'**Forget it**, we're far too busy.'
- 'We really need a larger house.'  
'**Forget it**, we can't afford it.'

#### Language Help

More commonly, you say **forget it** when you wish to tell someone that something is not important and that they should not worry about it:

- 'I'm sorry that I tore your skirt.'  
'**Forget it**, it was an old one.'

### least

#### at least

You use **at least** when you wish to change something which you have just said, often in order to make your statement less definite:

- Meg's on holiday this week—**at least** I think she is.
- My father knows the new principal—**at least** he's met him a couple of times.

### Language Help

You also use **at least** when you wish to suggest that a situation is not as bad as it might have been or to say something positive about a bad or negative situation:

- *The new waitress may not be very quick, but **at least** she's hard-working.*

You also use **at least** to suggest the smallest thing that should be done, even if nothing else is done:

- *You may dislike her, but you should **at least** admit that she's a good worker.*

### mean

#### I mean

You use **I mean** when you wish to explain what you have just said:

- *I'm surprised that Jane and Mike have bought a flat together. **I mean** they've only known each other a few weeks.*
- *I can't understand why Mum and Dad want to go there again on holiday. **I mean** it always rains and there's nothing for us to do.*

### Language Help

You also use **I mean** when you wish to correct something which you have said:

- *The next meeting's on Tuesday, **I mean** Thursday.*

### more

#### what's more

You use **what's more** when you wish to add something to what you have just said, often something which is more important, more interesting or surprising:

- *Jim's new girlfriend is very pretty and, **what's more**, she seems to be very much in love with him.*
- *Ken is leaving to work for another firm and, **what's more**, his two assistants are going with him.*

### rate

#### at any rate

You use **at any rate** when you are going to say something that is more exact or more accurate than what you have just said:

- *The house repairs will take three months. **At any rate**, that's what the builder told us.*
- *Jill is going to repay the money. **At any rate**, she promised me that she would.*

### really?

You say **really?** when you have just heard something that surprises you or interests you very much:

- *'Fred's given up football.'*  
**'Really?'** *He told me that he was going to play for another two seasons.'*
- *'Jane's had a baby.'*  
**'Really?'** *I didn't know she was pregnant.'*

### there

#### there you are

You say **there you are** when you give or pass something to somebody:

- ***There you are.** That's \$5 change.*
- ***There you are.** That's the key to the front door.*

### Language Help

A more informal form of the expression **there you are** is **there you go**. The expression **here you are** has the same meaning.

## Exercise 30

Answer the following questions.

**A** Replace the words in colour with idioms from the passage which are similar in meaning.

- 1 The new neighbours seem very friendly and *also* they like dogs!
- 2 I'm going to be late for work and *I couldn't care less*.
- 3 'Bob's retiring at the end of this year.'  
*'Is that so? I didn't realize he was that old.'*
- 4 *Here you are*. That's the book I promised to lend you.

**B** Insert the word missing from each idiom below.

- 1 'Are you going to university in the autumn?'  
*'That \_\_\_\_\_ I haven't got my exam results yet.'*
- 2 Going by train is the quickest way to get there—*at \_\_\_\_\_ rate*, that's what my friend told me.
- 3 'I was wondering if I could borrow your blue dress to wear to the party tonight?'  
*'\_\_\_\_\_ it! I'm going to wear it myself.'*

**C** Fill in each blank with a suitable idiom from the passage.

- 1 I'm amazed that Sue has given up her job. \_\_\_\_\_ she doesn't have another job to go to and jobs in publishing are very scarce.
- 2 My girlfriend speaks Spanish—\_\_\_\_\_ she knows enough to be able to find accommodation, buy food and so on.

**D** Rewrite the first sentence using an American English expression which has the same meaning.

*It's a deal.* Our competitors have made us an offer for the firm and we have accepted it.

## Answers

### Exercise 1

- A** 1 For goodness' sake  
2 As a matter of fact  
3 easier said than done
- B** 1 not to mention  
2 Basically  
3 I'm easy
- C** 1 In any case  
2 in all honesty  
3 I dread to think  
4 Let's see

### Exercise 2

- A** 1 How's it going?  
2 I haven't the foggiest  
3 Fat chance!
- B** 1 Not on your life!  
2 give or take  
3 you could always
- C** 1 Tell me about it!  
2 You never know  
3 I hate to think
- D** How are you? (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 3

- A** 1 Feel free  
2 What about it?  
3 Heaven knows
- B** 1 Wonders will never cease!  
2 There's nothing to touch  
3 not anywhere near  
4 Talk about mean!  
5 Believe or not
- C** 1 Heaven knows  
2 You'll never guess!

### Exercise 4

- A** 1 Talk of the devil!  
2 Come to think of it  
3 Funny you should say that  
4 If you ask me
- B** 1 Too true!  
2 No way!  
3 it's no big deal

- 4 not exactly
- C** 1 That's news to me  
2 Don't bank on it

### Exercise 5

- A** 1 Quite right, too!  
2 What's up?  
3 Speak for yourself!
- B** 1 not my cup of tea  
2 That's all I need!  
3 too good to be true
- C** 1 It's beyond me  
2 So what's new?  
3 That's a first!
- D** Dream on! (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 6

- A** 1 I shouldn't wonder  
2 You took the words right out of my mouth  
3 Same here
- B** 1 Don't say that!  
2 Roll on the weekend!  
3 Don't hold your breath!
- C** 1 Wouldn't you know it?  
2 Trust you!
- D** Isn't that just like the thing? (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 7

- A** 1 To put it mildly  
2 what's the use?  
3 Give it a rest  
4 Do me a favour
- B** 1 When it comes down to it  
2 Believe you me  
3 Who cares?
- C** 1 Okay, okay, okay!  
2 In your dreams!
- D** Heavens! (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 8

- A** 1 wait for it!

- 2 for what it's worth  
3 actually

- B** 1 Rather you than me.  
2 That's Jim all over.  
3 You've got me there.
- C** 1 I haven't the faintest.  
2 Just between you and me

- D** You use the expression I haven't the foggiest when you want to emphasize that you don't know the answer to something. (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 9

- A** 1 What a thought!  
2 I'll tell you what!  
3 Take it from me.  
4 Guess what?
- B** 1 I'm out of here!  
2 Not likely!  
3 Pass!
- C** 1 We've had it!  
2 About time too!  
3 You and me both!

### Exercise 10

- A** 1 Look who's talking!  
2 Why break the habit of a lifetime?  
3 first things first  
4 Come off it!
- B** 1 I'm dying for  
2 I've had it up to here  
3 Get lost!
- C** 1 and that's that!  
2 It beats me
- D** I told you so (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 11

- A** 1 No problem!  
2 Never mind.  
3 I thought as much.
- B** 1 And the rest!  
2 That's what I call

- C** 1 Famous last words!  
2 You've got to hand it to Bill.
- D** get cracking; get a move on; step on it (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 12

- A** 1 remember  
2 Absolutely!  
3 it's not on  
4 I nearly died
- B** 1 I'm with you there.  
2 You're telling me!  
3 I could do without  
4 What about ...?
- C** 1 Give me ... any day!  
2 That'll be the day!

### Exercise 13

- A** 1 There are no two ways about it.  
2 You'll see!  
3 Don't get me wrong!  
4 You could have fooled me!  
5 it wasn't my day
- B** 1 To tell you the truth  
2 No buts about it.  
3 No chance!
- C** 1 Cheer up!  
2 How come?

### Exercise 14

- A** 1 That comes as no surprise.  
2 Search me!  
3 Have you heard the latest?
- B** 1 I wouldn't put it past  
2 Let's face it!  
3 Good question!
- C** 1 There again  
2 I hope so
- D** Quite frankly (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 15

- A** 1 Not to worry!  
2 What I'd give for ...  
3 before you know it
- B** 1 There's no time like the present.  
2 That makes two of us.  
3 I'm not a great one for  
4 So far, so good.
- C** 1 What did I tell you?  
2 There you go.  
3 with a bit of luck

### Exercise 16

- A** 1 just now  
2 Me too!  
3 Let's  
4 I bet  
5 I'm afraid
- B** 1 Give me a break  
2 Count me in!
- C** 1 Right enough  
2 She's not a bad teacher.  
3 That's too bad

### Exercise 17

- A** 1 No wonder  
2 Any luck?  
3 don't get your hopes up
- B** 1 All right  
2 Good heavens!  
3 What a shame!  
4 Great!
- C** 1 He'll be lucky!  
2 The thing is  
3 Is it just me ...?

### Exercise 18

- A** 1 The more the merrier.  
2 on second thoughts  
3 All in good time.  
4 Since when?
- B** 1 That's what you think.  
2 There's no hurry.
- C** 1 Why don't we ...?  
2 and that's it  
3 I suppose so
- D** Ask me another! (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 19

- A** 1 Thanks a lot.  
2 Sure!  
3 Hardly!
- B** 1 What's the matter with Jill?  
2 Certainly not!  
3 I've no idea.
- C** 1 Suit yourself!  
2 Just a minute.  
3 It's just that
- D** I couldn't care less. (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 20

- A** 1 But what if ...?  
2 you know  
3 Hang on!  
4 I expect so.
- B** 1 There's no doubt about it.  
2 Don't you think?  
3 Right you are!
- C** 1 The only trouble is  
2 I know for a fact  
3 just in case
- D** When trying to explain something to someone, you use you know to check that he or she knows what you are referring to.

### Exercise 21

- A** 1 Wait and see.  
2 Look!  
3 Listen!
- B** 1 Fair enough.  
2 It's no use
- C** 1 Why on earth ...?  
2 of all people.  
3 I couldn't very well that's fine by me; that's OK with me (*Sentence subjective*)

### Exercise 22

- A** 1 Oh dear!  
2 Of course.

- 3 Sorry!
- 4 is it?
- B** 1 I was wondering if
- 2 As far as I know
- 3 Some hope!
- C** 1 I'll ring you
- 2 That's no good.
- D** speaking of (*Sentence subjective*)

#### Exercise 23

- A** 1 It serves you right
- 2 I hate to tell you
- 3 I must say
- 4 Be my guest!
- B** 1 What about ...?
- 2 I'm fine.
- 3 In fact
- C** 1 Come on!
- 2 No fear!
- 3 We had better

#### Exercise 24

- A** 1 Well done!
- 2 Beat it!
- 3 Here goes!
- 4 I know
- B** 1 No such luck!
- 2 That should do the trick.
- 3 Mind your own business!
- 4 Fingers crossed!
- C** 1 Some hope!
- 2 I can't imagine

#### Exercise 25

- A** 1 Not really.
- 2 By all means
- 3 I can't think why
- B** 1 I thought I'd...
- 2 though
- 3 Good!
- C** 1 By the way
- 2 I don't think much of ...
- 3 Having said that
- 4 I dare say

#### Exercise 26

- A** 1 Let me
- 2 Can you ...?
- 3 Help!
- 4 then
- 5 at least
- 6 Would you like ...?
- B** 1 At this rate
- 2 There's nothing to it.
- 3 With all due respect
- C** Watch out! (*Sentence subjective*)

#### Exercise 27

- A** 1 Any day now.
- 2 thanks to
- 3 I'll leave you to it.
- B** 1 I can't wait!
- 2 If you don't mind my saying so
- 3 You bet
- C** 1 Tell me
- 2 It's none of your business!
- D** so?; so what? (*Sentence subjective*)

#### Exercise 28

- A** 1 for once
- 2 if you like
- 3 Now then
- B** 1 I'm not bothered.
- 2 No doubt
- 3 Fair enough
- C** 1 It's just as well
- 2 Like it or not
- 3 I know what you mean.
- D** You must be joking! (*Sentence subjective*)

#### Exercise 29

- A** 1 Ouch!
- 2 I can't tell you
- 3 Nonsense!
- 4 or anything
- B** 1 Touch wood!
- 2 As a matter of fact
- 3 Don't you dare!
- C** 1 Sure!
- 2 It's no bother.
- D** Me neither! (*Sentence subjective*)

#### Exercise 30

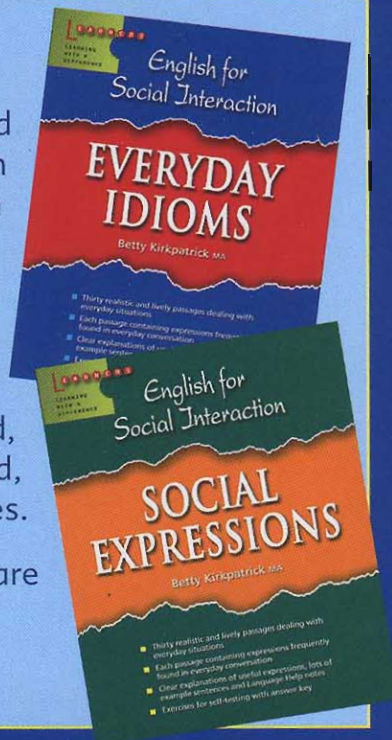
- A** 1 what's more
- 2 I don't care
- 3 Really?
- 4 There you are.
- B** 1 That depends.
- 2 at any rate
- 3 Forget it!
- C** 1 I mean
- 2 at least
- D** It's a done deal.



**English for Social Interaction** is intended to help foreign learners acquire spoken English skills so that they can engage in fluent communication.

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### About the Writer

A graduate of Edinburgh University, Betty Kirkpatrick has had a long and distinguished career as editor, publisher and writer of English reference books. She was the editor of the *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, the editor of *Roget's Thesaurus* and the compiler of the *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus*. Her *Dictionary of Clichés*, published by Bloomsbury, is also available in a US edition and a Japanese edition.

