

Worksheet 3: Idioms 1

1 Look at the phrases in the list below. Do you know what they mean? How many are idioms?

up to a point turn a blind eye (to sth) by all means
 out of the question you'll be lucky get a move on no wonder
 it's not the end of the world throw in the towel so far, so good



2 Complete 1–10 using idioms from Exercise 1 in the correct form.

- 1 A: How's your course going?
B: _____.
- 2 I think Alex's mother _____ some of his bad behaviour.
- 3 A: Could I take a day off work tomorrow?
B: No, I'm afraid that's _____.
- 4 Emily, _____ or we'll be late.
- 5 A: I'm hoping to get tickets for the 100 metres final at the Olympics.
B: _____!
- 6 A: Do you agree with me about the need for more practice?
B: Hmm, _____.
- 7 A: Could I borrow your grammar notes?
B: Yes, _____.
- 8 Matt's been working all day, so _____ he's tired.
- 9 A: I didn't get that job after all.
B: Well, _____.
- 10 I may not win, but I have no intention of _____ yet.

3 If you wanted to find the meaning of the above idioms in a dictionary, which word in each idiom in Exercise 1 would you look up?

4 Look up the idioms in the list below to check their meaning. Are any informal?

a nasty piece of work bide your time
 to say the least a matter of days/weeks/months
 get your act together have it in for someone

5 Read the text below and underline the idioms from Exercise 4. Then try to find six more idioms and underline them. You could try looking up the key word to see if your idiom exists, and to check the meaning.

I used to lecture at Wallchester College, and my boss was, to say the least, quite a nasty piece of work. He was friendly enough at the interview, and on the first couple of days at work everything seemed alright. But I soon realized that he was just biding his time, and sure enough it was only a matter of weeks before I was called into his office. He then produced a great long list of things I'd done wrong, and ended up saying, 'Come on, Ben, get your act together.' Well, I'm not very good at taking criticism at the best of times, so I was pretty angry. But I decided that, for the time being at least, I would just keep my head down and try to make a go of things. Eventually though, the constant carping and criticism really got on my nerves. It was obvious he really had it in for me – even more than the other teachers in my department - and one day when he was being particularly unpleasant, I just flew off the handle and then handed in my notice.

6 Complete sentences 1–10 with one word. Are they true for you? If not, change them so that they are true.

- 1 The thing that _____ on my nerves most is people being late.
- 2 I fly off the _____ easily.
- 3 I'm not very patient at the best of _____.
- 4 I'd like to move overseas, but that's out of the _____ at the moment.
- 5 I find learning English idioms a bit challenging, to say the _____.
- 6 My next-door neighbour is a nasty _____ of work.
- 7 I'm off on holiday in a _____ of weeks, now.
- 8 I've never had a teacher who had it _____ for me; they've all been supportive.
- 9 My current dictionary is OK for my level, for the time _____.
- 10 If I saw someone stealing in a supermarket, I might turn a _____ eye to it.