

Essential Idioms in English

Phrasal Verbs and Collocations

F I F T H E D I T I O N

ROBERT J. DIXSON



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Essential Idioms in English: Phrasal Verbs and Collocations

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Pearson Education, 10 Bank Street, White Plains, NY 10606

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Cover and interior design: Tracey Munz Cataldo
Digital layout specialist: Lisa Ghiozzi
Text font: Meta Plus Book 11/14, Sabon 11/12
Text and cover art: George Thompson

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dixon, Robert James.

Essential idioms in English / Robert J. Dixon.—New ed. [5th ed.]

p. cm

Includes index.

ISBN 0-13-141176-4

1. English language—Textbooks for foreign speakers. 2. English language—Idioms. I. Title.

PE1128.D513 2003

428.2'4—dc21

ISBN: 0-13-141176-4

2003044730

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give (someone) a big hand	
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draw the line at . . . get out of line . . . dry run . . .	
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9. The boat was moving *in backward and forward motion* because of the large waves on the ocean.
- at least (Lesson 4)
 - back and forth
 - on purpose (Lesson 3)
10. Vera *had the habit* of biting her nails until they were very short, but now she's stopped doing that.
- has been used to
 - used to
 - cut back on

B Fill in each blank with the appropriate form of an idiomatic expression from this lesson.

ABE: Zeke! It's already 8 A.M. It's time for you to _____.

ZEKE: What do you mean? It's the weekend, and I _____ sleeping until at least 10 A.M. on Saturdays!

ABE: Don't you remember? We're organizing a beach picnic for our sports club today.

ZEKE: Oh, I forgot about that. Just give me fifteen more minutes. I can be ready _____.

ABE: Look, there are things _____ to take to the beach and to set up, like the volleyball net. We need to do it together.

ZEKE: Boy, why did you agree that we would _____ the picnic? It's too much responsibility.

4. Before the important exam, I _____ my lecture notes for the class.
5. Jason can't seem to locate his car keys. Could you help us _____ them?
6. _____ There's a car coming towards us quickly.

D Fill in each blank with the appropriate form of the idioms using **take** listed below.

to take one's time	to take off	to take out
to take part in	to take into account	to take a trip
to take place	to take turns	to take hold of

1. Do you have any idea when the symphony concert is scheduled _____?
2. To drive safely, you should _____ the steering wheel with both hands.
3. You should _____ when you walk on ice. If you hurry, you might fall down.
4. Bill finally _____ the new girl in school. They went to the park together and had a picnic.
5. Many young actors and actresses wanted _____ the theater production of *Hamlet*. Unfortunately, only a few were chosen.
6. Kurt didn't have enough money to pay for dinner because he didn't _____ the cost of the tax and tip.

9. The President's speech *was accepted* so well that all the members of Congress stood up and applauded.
 - a. went over
 - b. was bound to
 - c. found out (Lesson 2)
10. Wes is planning to go with us to Disneyland *without doubt*.
 - a. out of the question (Lesson 8)
 - b. at last (Lesson 2)
 - c. for sure

B Answer these questions orally by making use of the idiomatic expressions studied in this lesson.

1. If you lost your job and didn't have much money, what would you have to *do without*?
2. Why are students in some schools placed in classes *according to* ability?
3. If parents want to raise their children well, what are they *bound to* do?
4. If you see a man leaving a house through a window at night, what might you *take him for*?
5. What things would you be sure to *try out* before buying?
6. Why might you feel like *tearing up* a letter or some schoolwork?
7. Have you ever said or done something special that *went over* well? What was it?
8. What should you do if you *run out of* energy while you're studying in the evening?
9. Are you a serious person or a fun-loving person *at heart*?
10. Do you like to keep cash *on hand* for emergencies? How much cash do you keep *on hand*?

- The pounding of ocean waves against the coast gradually *wears* it *away*.
- Johnny has *worn through* the seat of his pants.

on the whole: in general, in most ways (also: **for the most part**)

- He is, *on the whole*, a good student.
- *For the most part*, I agree with your suggestions.

touch and go: risky, uncertain until the end

- The complicated medical operation was *touch and go* for several hours.
- The outcome of the soccer final was *touch and go* for the entire match.

EXERCISES

A *Substitute an idiomatic expression for the word or words in italics, making any necessary grammatical changes as well. Then complete each sentence appropriately with your own idea. Also try to use idioms from previous lessons.*

1. Mary *discontinued* her relationship with Paul because she couldn't . . .
Mary broke off her relationship with Paul because she couldn't put up with him anymore.
2. The effect of the medicine *disappeared gradually* after I . . .
3. I think that we should *wait without going to bed* for our daughter until she . . .
4. *In general*, it is best for a student learning English to . . .

- I used to play chess very well, but today you beat me easily. I must be *losing my touch*.

under control: well managed

- The police officer radioed to the station that she had the emergency situation *under control* and didn't need any assistance.
- Thank you for offering to help with dinner, but I think I have it *under control*.

to drag one's heels/feet: to act slowly or reluctantly

- My landlord is *dragging his heels* about fixing the furnace. If he doesn't fix it soon, I'm going to refuse to pay rent.
- Milla seemed willing to organize the volunteer activity, but now she is *dragging her feet*.

EXERCISES

A *Substitute an idiomatic expression for the word or words in italics, making any necessary grammatical changes as well. Then complete each sentence appropriately with your own idea. Also try to use idioms from previous lessons.*

1. During the lengthy workers' strike, the police had to *become involved* when . . .
2. After leaving his office down the hall, my supervisor *briefly entered* my office to . . .
3. The old man who founded the company decided to *retire* when . . .

5. (intimidate) You can't _____ him.
6. (invisible) He tried to leave _____.
7. (invisible) The _____ of the glass was amazing.

Finding Collocations

Example phrases and sentences sometimes present collocations—words that are often used together. Read this dictionary entry. Pay attention to the example sentence.

fib¹ /fɪb/ *n* INFORMAL a small, unimportant lie: *You shouldn't tell fibs. It's not nice.*

EXERCISE A Circle the collocations in the example phrases and sentences in these entries.

feud /fyud/ *n* an angry quarrel between two people or groups that continues for a long time: *a bitter feud between the two neighbors* –**feud** *n* [I]

flee /fli/ *v* **fled** /flɛd/, **fled**, **fleeing** [I, T] leave somewhere very quickly in order to escape from danger: *The president was forced to flee the country after the revolution. | thousands of people fleeing from the fighting*

EXERCISE B Use the dictionary entries for fib, feud, and flee to help you complete these sentences with collocations.

1. I wanted to _____ *flee from* _____ the noisy room.
2. Linda says that her boyfriend is rich, but I don't believe her. She often _____.
3. Many people will _____ if a war starts.
4. There is a _____ those two soccer teams.

Collocations

going / like / of the question / of control / free / funny / it / of date

Review: Lessons 1–13

- A. 1. d 2. l 3. a 4. g 5. f 6. l 7. k 8. b 9. c 10. e 11. h
12. j
- B. 1. F 2. F 3. T 4. T 5. F 6. T 7. F 8. T 9. F 10. T 11. T
12. F
- C. 1. to look at 2. to look into 3. to look up 4. looked over 5. look
for 6. Look out
- D. 1. to take place 2. take hold of 3. take your time 4. took out 5. to
take part in 6. to take into account 7. take turns 8. take off 9. to
take a trip
- E. 1. get rid of 2. got used to 3. to get over 4. to get on; get off
5. get out of; get in 6. to get along with 7. gets up; gets to; gets back

Lesson 14

- A. 1. c 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. c 6. c 7. a 8. b 9. b 10. a

Lesson 15

- A. 1. c 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. a 6. c 7. a 8. c 9. b 10. c

Lesson 16

- A. 1. b 2. c 3. c 4. b 5. b 6. b 7. c 8. c 9. b 10. a

Lesson 17

- A. 1. a 2. b 3. a 4. c 5. a 6. c 7. a 8. b 9. b 10. a

Lesson 18

- A. 1. c 2. a 3. a 4. a 5. b 6. b 7. c 8. b 9. a 10. c

Lesson 19

- A. 1. b 2. a 3. b 4. b 5. c 6. a 7. a 8. b 9. b 10. c

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carry on 210
carry out 135
catch a cold 23
catch fire 62
catch on 171
catch up 110
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check into (R) 56
check on (R) 142
check out 205
check over (R) 29
check up on 142
checkup [noun] (R) 142
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clear cut 68
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(someone) 225
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