

American Language Course BOOK OF IDIOMS

Slang, Special Expressions, & Idiomatic Language



Defense Language Institute English Language Center
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas



Preface

Objective

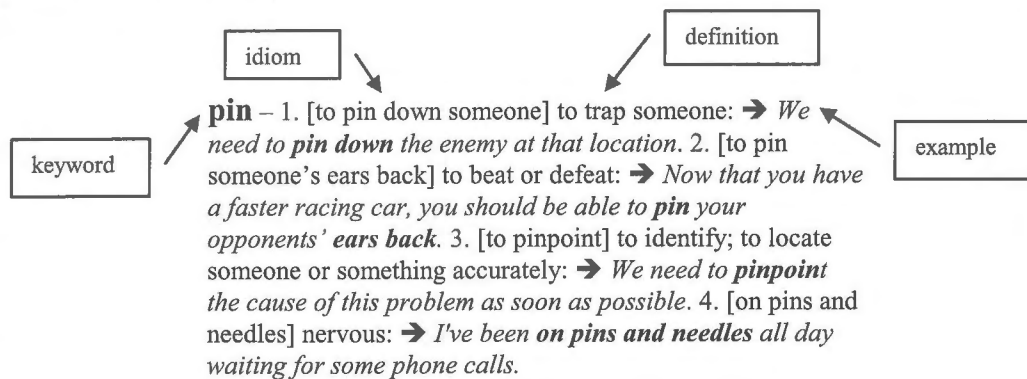
The *Book of Idioms* is designed to assist in the acquisition of current American English idiomatic expressions.

Intended Audience

This book was written with English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) students in mind. Students enrolled in the American Language Course (ALC) will benefit from these expressions in their follow-on-training (FOT) courses, as this book includes general military expressions as well as everyday expressions.

Layout

Idiomatic expressions are listed in alphabetical order, and students can find example sentences for every idiom. Certain expressions are grouped by a common keyword. Within each grouping, expressions are alphabetized, numbered, and placed in brackets with example sentences following. Expressions with multiple meanings are presented in a readable manner with each meaning and its example sentence indicated by a lowercase letter in parentheses. See diagram below.



Note: Space has been provided at the end of each alphabetical break under the subtitle **Student Notes** for students to write in the idioms they encounter during their studies

Inquiries and Orders

Inquiries concerning these materials, including purchase requests, should be addressed to
DLIELC/LESL

2235 Andrews Avenue

Lackland Air Force Base, Texas 78236-5259

E-mail: DLIELC.LESL.workflow@us.af.mil

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A

A-1 – excellent or superior: → *Steve's car is in A-1 condition after all the repairs.*

ABC – [as easy as ABC] easy to accomplish, solve, or use: → *The salesman says this remote control is as easy to use as ABC.*

ABC's – the basics: → *We had to learn the ABC's of computers before we could start using them.*

A to Z – [from A to Z] from beginning to end: → *He knows this repair manual from A to Z.*

an about face – [to make/do an about face] to reverse a decision: → *Our commander did an about face from her earlier position and sent Maj Jones instead of Maj Smith.*

about right – something that is basically correct: → *This report is about right, so I'll approve it.*

about to – prepared or ready to do something: → *We were about to leave when the phone rang.*

above – [above all] especially or mainly: → *Sally enjoys exercising, but above all she enjoys tennis.*

abreast of the situation – knowing what is happening; staying informed: → *We need to keep the managers abreast of the situation.*

absent-minded – forgetful: → *Jack is absent-minded and always forgets to bring his books.*

accident – [by accident] unexpectedly: → *We met my old boss by accident at the movies last night.*

accord – 1. [of one accord] feeling the same about something: → *Fred and the boss are of one accord on this, so pay attention to what Fred tells you.* 2. [of one's own accord] voluntarily: → *Yesterday, he surrendered to the police of his own accord.*

account – [of no account] of no worth or value: → *His remark was of no account, so don't get mad.*

ace – 1. [to ace] to do extremely well: → *She aced the hard test.* 2. [an ace in the hole] someone or something kept as a surprise until the right moment: → *Joe's persuasiveness turned out to be our ace in the hole during final negotiations.* 3. [to have an ace

up one's sleeve] to have the most important information or second plan kept in reserve: → *He always has an ace up his sleeve; if this plan doesn't work, he'll have another one.*

an Achilles' heel – a weak area that can lead to destruction: → *Speeding is going to turn out to be his Achilles' heel.*

ack-ack – antiaircraft artillery or its fire (more recently termed Triple A): → *The planes encountered a lot of ack-ack before they reached the target.*

across the board – including everyone or all things: → *Management has ordered pay cuts across the board.*

act – 1. [an act of God] a natural occurrence: → *Our home insurance does not pay for damages caused by an act of God.* 2. [to put on an act] to pretend: → *George isn't rich; he's merely putting on an act.*

after one's own heart – liking someone because of similar interests: → *With his love for reading, he is a man after my own heart.*

age – [of age] 21 years or older; 18 years or older in some cases: → *When Evan comes of age, he will receive \$800,000 from his uncle's estate.*

ahead of the game – having a gain or a profit; being better than was expected: → *We'll be ahead of the game if we can get all the tanks ready by 0800.*

air – 1. [by air] in an airplane: → *Do you plan to travel by air to California?* 2. [up in the air] undecided or not settled: → *The plans for the next meeting are up in the air until the captain returns.*

all – 1. [all along] from the beginning: → *I knew all along that the car wouldn't be ready.* 2. [all at once] together or at the same time: → *The teacher asked the students to say the words all at once.* 3. [all in all] considering everything: → *The trip was long and tiring, but all in all we had a good time.* 4. [all right] something is good or approved: → *It's all right if you want to leave.* 5. [All's well that ends well.] an expression that shows a happy ending despite a negative beginning: → *Although John's controversial proposal was finally accepted, his only comment was, "All's well that ends well."* 6. [at all] in the least; to the smallest degree: → *The old lady was not at all disturbed by the loud noise.*

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alley – [up one's alley] well matched to one's likes and abilities: → *Playing soccer is right up his alley.*

allowances – [to make allowances for] to take into consideration: → *You must make allowances for inexperience with very young recruits.*

ammo – ammunition: → *The greatest problem that unit has is its current ammo supply.*

the apple of one's eye – someone who is thought very highly of: → *Andrew is the apple of his mother's eye.*

apple pie – 1. symbolic of what is good about America: → *Remember—you're fighting for Mom, apple pie, and the American flag.* 2. [as American as apple pie] typically American: → *My friend from Texas said that going to football games is as American as apple pie.* 3. [in apple-pie order] very neat; tidy. → *Mary's desk is always in such apple-pie order.*

an arm and a leg – a lot of money: → *Wally probably paid an arm and a leg for that sports car.*

armed to the teeth – heavily armed (with weapons): → *The soldiers went into battle armed to the teeth.*

arms – [with open arms] welcoming warmly: → *If you agree to the transfer, they'll welcome you with open arms.*

around the clock – 24 hours a day; an entire day: → *That unit worked around the clock to finish the mission on time.*

ASAP – acronym for "as soon as possible.": → *The First Sergeant wants you to report to the Motor Pool ASAP.*

asleep at the wheel – not alert to an opportunity: → *When John's name was called, he was asleep at the wheel and missed his chance.*

at – [at once] immediately: → *We were told to leave the building at once due to the smoke.*

an average Joe – a person displaying usual or ordinary behavior: → *The new president of the company is such an average Joe; he enjoys hamburgers and hotdogs like the rest of us.*

an awkward age – early adolescence: → *His*

little sister is at that awkward age now, but she'll probably be very poised and graceful in a few years.

AWOL – [to go or be AWOL] absent without leave: → *Three more privates went AWOL last night.*

ax – [to have an ax to grind] to have a private reason for being involved in something: → *I'm not sure why he wants to attend the meeting, unless he has some ax to grind.*

Student Notes

B

a babe in the woods – innocent and inexperienced people: → *The boys were like babes in the woods when they first joined their father's business.*

back – 1. [a back-breaker] a difficult job; a job that may cause failure: → *Having to get around the city without a car was the back-breaker of the whole business trip.* 2. [to back off] (a) to stop annoying or bothering: → *You need to back off from George until*

he finishes his big project. (b) to go easier; to change an order: → *The commander **backed off** from his earlier order to make us do two hours of extra PT.* 3. [a back-seat driver] an automobile passenger who annoys the driver by telling him/her how to drive: → *Henry says Jean is a **back-seat driver**, so don't let her in your car.* 4. [a back-slapper] a person who shows too much feeling/emotion towards someone in an artificial way: → *Henry is a **back-slapper**. He greeted me like he had known me all his life.* 5. [a back-stabber] one who lies or does something to hurt a friend or trusting person: → *Alvin is a **back-stabber**, so be careful of what you say around him.* 6. [back talk] a rude reply: → *The teacher told the students that she would tolerate no **back talk** from them.* 7. [to backtrack] return over the same way or route: → *The unit had to **backtrack** many miles because of bad roads.* 8. [behind one's back] when one is not present: → *Mary was angry at the club members who made the decision **behind her back**.* 9. [to get off one's back] to leave someone alone; to stop annoying someone: → *I wish she'd just **get off my back** for once.*

to **bad-mouth** – to talk badly about someone/something: → *Steve **bad-mouthed** Pete after they lost the soccer game.*

bag – 1. [to bag] to get or capture; to shoot: → *The first time my son went hunting, he **bagged** a twelve-point buck.* 2. [in the bag] certain: → *He was so popular that they thought his election was **in the bag**.*

a **baker's dozen** – thirteen: → *That store gives you a **baker's dozen** when you buy cookies.*

balance – [off balance] being unprepared: → *I was caught **off balance** when I was asked to sing in front of the whole group.*

ball – 1. [a ball park figure/estimate] a guess as to the correct amount: → *Our boss needs only a **ball park figure** right now, so it doesn't have to be exact.* 2. [on the ball] paying attention and doing things very well: → *That new officer is **on the ball**.* 3. [That's the way/how the ball bounces.] That's the way it is.: → *We lost the contract we worked so hard for, but **that's the way the ball bounces**.*

a **ball game** – [a whole new ball game] a change that now makes everything totally different: → *If they really filed a lawsuit against us, that makes it a **whole new ball game**.*

bandwagon – [on the bandwagon] following the crowd; joining a cause that is currently popular: → *The mayor got **on the bandwagon** to improve lighting in the city parks.*

bang – [to get a bang out of something] something that is fun; a joy: → *Antonio gets a big **bang out of** playing soccer.*

to **bank on** – to depend on: → *Don't **bank on** him to be here on time; it's difficult to drive fast on these roads.*

a **barfly** – someone who goes to clubs and bars too much: → *Joe is a big **barfly**, always out drinking with his friends instead of working.*

bark – 1. [one's bark is worse than one's bite] not as mean as one appears: → *Don't let Jim's shouting frighten you; his **bark is worse than his bite**.* 2. [to bark up the wrong tree] to look for a solution in the wrong place: → *I had nothing to do with that project getting canceled; you're **barking up the wrong tree**.*

a **barrel** – [to have someone over a barrel] to have a big advantage over someone else: → *Sue **has** Steve over a **barrel** since only she knows how to correct the report.*

bars – [behind bars] in prison: → *If Aaron keeps shoplifting, he'll end up **behind bars**.*

base – 1. [to get to first base] to make the first big step toward a goal: → *We negotiated for hours and didn't even **get to first base**.* 2. [off base] wrong; incorrect: → *You may be right, but the platoon leader thinks you are way **off base**.* 3. [to touch base] to meet very briefly in order to share or verify information: → *Before we leave, I just wanted to **touch base** with you and make sure we all understand who must attend the meeting.*

a **basket case** – a person who is mentally and/or emotionally shattered: → *Dan became a **basket case** after the tragic accident.*

bat – 1. [to not bat an eye] to not show emotion or interest: → *When the teacher told John that he failed the exam, he didn't **bat an eye**.* 2. [batting average] originally a baseball term meaning the level of success kept by someone in any activity: → *Jack's **batting average** at the office is great; all of his projects have been successful.* 3. [like a bat out of hell] quickly; very fast: → *He lit the fuse and ran **like a bat out of hell**.*

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to **batten down** – to cover and fasten down: → *Be sure to **batten down** all loose objects before the storm arrives.*

battle tested – having been proven valuable or worthy: → *Those troops were **battle tested** after months of combat.*

to **bawl out** – to severely criticize someone; to yell at someone: → *Ted's instructor **bawled him out** for not being attentive.*

a **BCD** – a bad conduct discharge: → *He was given a **BCD** for his actions during the war.*

a **BDU** – a Battle Dress Uniform: → *I wear my **BDU** to work every day.*

beam – [off the beam] in the wrong direction; incorrect: → *His confused reply showed that he was totally **off the beam**.*

a **bear** – [to have a bear by the tail] to be committed to something that turns out to be much larger than first expected; same as "a tiger by the tail": → *We **had a bear by the tail** when we tried to take the hill with only 200 men.*

to **bear in mind** – to remember: → ***Bear in mind** that you must keep your supervisor informed of any changes.*

beat – 1. [to beat a dead horse] to continue after something has been concluded: → *Don't punish Joe any more. That would only be **beating a dead horse**.* 2. [to beat a hasty retreat] to run away from an uncomfortable or bad situation: → *The boys **beat a hasty retreat** from the snarling dogs.* 3. [to beat around/about the bush] to try to say something indirectly; to not come to the point: → *Will you stop **beating around the bush** and tell me what you want?* 4. [to beat back] to force to retreat: → *Under heavy fire, the enemy was **beaten back**.* 5. [to beat it] to leave immediately: → *Jim always tells his little sister to **beat it** when he doesn't want her around.* 6. [to beat one's brains out] to work very hard: → *He **beat his brains out** trying to remember the client's first name.* 7. [to beat someone to the draw/punch] to do something before another person who is trying the same thing can do it: → *He **beat me to the draw** when he suggested the changes.* 8. [to beat the bushes] to search for something in a complete way: → *They **beat the bushes** trying to find a tire for the old car.* 9. [(It) beats me] not understanding

something: → *Person A: What's he doing? Person B: **Beats me**. Ask him.*

a **bed of roses** – a place of beauty, ease, and comfort: → *If you think law school is going to be a **bed of roses**, you're mistaken.*

bee – [as busy as a bee] very excited or working industriously: → *When we walked into the office, every clerk looked **as busy as a bee**.*

to **beef up** – to give more strength to; to reinforce: → *I want you to **beef up** your second paragraph with a couple of examples.*

a **beeline** – [to make a beeline for] to take the shortest route: → *When the instructor dismissed the class, the students **made a beeline** for the snack bar.*

Been there, done that. – a phrase that means "I've been in the exact same situation already." "I've had the same thing happen to me.": → *Person A: I just tried giving the orientation briefing to some people who didn't understand a word I said. Person B: **Been there, done that**.*

to **belay** – to ignore or stop (from the navy): → *The commander told us to **belay** that order and continue with our mission.*

belly – 1. [to bellyache] to complain: → *Jim **bellyached** the whole time we were working.* 2. [to go belly up] to fail completely, ending up like a dead animal: → *After a few promising months, his company **went belly up**.*

bend/bent – 1. [to bend over backwards] to try very hard: → *Dave is a very good person; he **bends over backwards** to help his friends.* 2. [to be bent on something] to have decided very strongly to do something: → *He's **bent on** becoming a lawyer when he graduates from college.* 3. [to be/get bent out of shape] to be angry or insulted: → *She **gets bent out of shape** whenever we talk about the last election.*

to **bet one's bottom dollar** – to be absolutely sure of something: → *You can **bet your bottom dollar** that we'll have the answer by noon today.*

better – 1. [better half] someone's husband or wife: → *The man wanted to know if his **better half** was also invited to the dinner.* 2. [to be better off] (a) to be happier or more content: → *We thought we'd be **better off** by moving to a larger house.* (b) to be

richer: → *The Smiths are **better off** now than they were two years ago.*

beyond – [to be beyond someone] to be too difficult to understand: → *I've never been able to understand physics; it's **beyond me**.*

a **bigwig** – an important person: → *Jose is a **bigwig** in the city government, so maybe he can help you.*

bind – [in a bind] in trouble or difficulty: → *Walter's **in a bind** because he doesn't have enough money to pay for the car repairs.*

bird – 1. [Birds of a feather flock together.] People with the same interests or character usually associate with one another.: → *Be careful with whom you associate. Most people assume that **birds of a feather flock together**.* 2. [to bird-dog] to follow closely; to supervise very carefully: → *I want you to **bird-dog** this operation from start to finish.* 3. [a bird's-eye-view] a general explanation: → *The instructor gave us a **bird's-eye-view** of the entire course.* 4. [for the birds] worthless; unsatisfactory; unacceptable: → *That's a bad plan; it's **for the birds**.*

bite – 1. [to bite off more than one can chew] to do something which is beyond one's ability or power: → *I think Joe **bit off more than he could chew** when he volunteered to paint his sister's house.* 2. [to bite one's head off] to reply in an angry manner: → *I asked her a simple question, and she **bit my head off**.* 3. [to bite the bullet] to continue in a difficult situation: → *The young recruit will have to **bite the bullet** and finish basic training.* 4. [to bite the dust] to fail; to die: → *The final exam was so tough that several students **bit the dust**.*

a **blabbermouth** – a very talkative person, especially one who says things that should be kept secret: → *Don't mention anything to Bill unless you want the whole office to know; he's a **blabbermouth**.*

black – 1. [black and blue] bruised: → *Rudy was all **black and blue** from the fall.* 2. [in black and white] in writing: → *I'll have to see it **in black and white** before I'll believe it.* 3. [black or white] clearly separated into just two opposite positions: → *This is not one of those **black or white** cases. There are many other possibilities we could consider.* 4. [a black sheep] a family or group member seen as not as good or as successful as the others: → *Steve is the **black sheep** of his family ever since his robbery conviction.* 5. [blacked out] having no lights for security; having all lights turned off to prevent being

seen: → *All buildings will be **blacked out** tonight during the preparedness exercise.*

to **blaze a trail** – to be the first person to do something: → *Why don't you go to the advanced training, and that way you can **blaze the trail** for the rest of us?*

a **bleeding heart** – one who has too many feelings or emotions about others/things: → *Joe is one of those **bleeding heart** liberals who want to raise taxes and restrict guns.*

a **blind date** – a first date between two persons who have never met before: → *Robert went out on a **blind date** with a friend of his sister's.*

to **blindsides** – to attack unexpectedly, as if directed toward one's blind spot: → *The meeting was cordial at first, but then they **blindsided** us with all kinds of accusations.*

blink – [on the blink] not functioning properly: → *My car is **on the blink** again, so I need to get a ride with you if I can.*

to **blitz** – to attack and defeat: → *During the skirmish, our unit **blitzed** a patrol squad and took them all prisoner.*

blood – 1. [bad blood] hatred or bad feelings within a relationship: → *There's a lot of **bad blood** between those two boys, so they fight all the time.* 2. [Blood is thicker than water.] a proverb meaning there is close loyalty among blood-related relatives: → *He had to help his brother avoid arrest. **Blood is thicker than water.*** 3. [to make one's blood boil] to make one very angry: → *His rude behavior at the party **made my blood boil**.* 4. [to make one's blood run cold] to fill with horror; to scare: → *Having to walk through the park at night **made my blood run cold**.* 5. [new blood/fresh blood] new people who can supplement the veterans: → *When is this office going to get some **new blood**?* 6. [to run in one's blood] to have an inherited inclination to do something: → *Her family's been in politics for generations, so I guess she'll run for Congress next year. It **runs in her blood**.*

blow – 1. [blow-by-blow] with much detail: → *The captain gave a **blow-by-blow** description of the attack.* 2. [to blow away] (a) to shoot fatally: → *The cop **blew him away** with a .357 Magnum.* (b) to favorably impress: → *Her final song just **blew me away**.* 3. [to blow it] to destroy, lose, or waste a good

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opportunity: → *I thought Steve would get that job, but he **blew it** when he showed up for the interview in gym clothes.* 4. [to blow off steam] to release extra energy or emotion: → *When Vanna is angry, she usually **blows off steam** by exercising.* 5. [to blow one's cool] to become very angry very quickly: → *Losing a quarter in the vending machine is no reason to **blow your cool**.* 6. [to blow one's cover] to destroy or make known one's secret: → *The secret agent **blew her cover** when she started speaking the wrong language on the phone.* 7. [to blow one's stack/top] to get very mad: → *He'll **blow his stack** when he finds out you lost the keys to the company car.* 8. [to blow something off] to not finish or not to do something: → *Patricia said that she is going to **blow off** studying tonight and go to a movie.* 9. [to blow the whistle on someone] to tell something against someone: → *After the robber was caught, he **blew the whistle on** his partners.* 10. [to blow up] to have an angry outburst: → *Jack **blew up** when he heard about the mandatory overtime.*

blue – 1. [blue blood] having the qualities of noble birth: → *Although he's related to the royal family, he never acts as if he's a **blue blood**.* 2. [a blue-collar worker] an industrial or factory worker: → *The factory will hire about 300 **blue-collar workers** next month.* 3. [out of the blue] totally unexpected: → *We were talking about possible promotions when, right **out of the blue**, Joe announced he's quitting tomorrow.* 4. [until one is blue in the face] until one can do no more; to the point of exhaustion: → *Pete argued with the supply officer **until he was blue in the face**, but he still couldn't get us a new printer cartridge.*

board – 1. [above board] totally honest, without secrecy or deception: → *No one can complain. All the promotions were handled **above board**.* 2. [across the board] including everyone or all things: → *Management has ordered pay cuts **across the board**.* 3. [to be on board] to be in agreement with everyone else: → *Everyone is **on board** except Mr. Smith, who still wants to go with Plan A.* 4. [to go by the board] to be abandoned or tossed aside: → *Once the new boss arrived, all the old rules and policies **went by the board**.* 5. [to take someone or something on board] to assume additional responsibilities: → *We have a full workload, so we can't **take any more projects on board**.*

boat – 1. [to be in the same boat] to be in similar conditions or situations: → *After the storm, we were all **in the same boat** because nobody had any*

electricity. 2. [to miss the boat] to lose out on a good opportunity: → *We had cake and ice cream about an hour ago. You **missed the boat**.* 3. [to rock the boat] to cause problems in a stable situation: → *People who have just been assigned to an office shouldn't **rock the boat** until they understand how everything works.*

body – 1. [to know where the bodies are buried] to know all the secrets of an organization, especially the negative things: → *He not only **knows where the bodies are buried**; he probably helped dig most of the graves.* 2. [over one's dead body] against one's strong opposition: → *You will get that promotion only **over my dead body**.*

to **bog down** – to slow up or stop: → *Everyone must do his job or the whole operation will **bog down**.*

boil – 1. [to boil down to] to reduce to the basic forms, facts, or questions: → *The success of the mission **boils down to** a complete understanding of every part of it.* 2. [boiling mad] very angry: → *Don't try to explain the situation to the major today. He is **boiling mad**.*

to **bomb something** – to fail: → *Sonya really **bombed** the test today since she didn't study last night.*

bone – 1. [to have a bone to pick with someone] to want to discuss a complaint: → *After the meeting, Jim told me that he **had a bone to pick with** me.* 2. [to make no bones about it] to make no secret; to admit: → *Julie **made no bones about** the fact that she didn't want to be here.*

bonkers – [to go bonkers or drive someone bonkers] to go or to make crazy: → *I thought I would **go bonkers** before the kids' dance recital finally ended.*

book – 1. [by the book] following correct procedures: → *We need to perform this operation **by the book**.* 2. [to be in someone's good/bad book] to be thought of positively/negatively by someone: → *Ever since he took credit for my proposal, he's **been in my bad book**.* 3. [to throw the book at someone] to inflict maximum penalties or punishment: → *Because he showed no remorse for his crime, the judge **threw the book at** him.*

a **boom box** – a portable cassette/CD player, usually of large size with powerful speakers: → *Joe's*

bringing his **boom box** to the party.

the **boondocks** – the remote countryside away from a permanent base or city: → *I got tired of living in the crowded city, so I built a house out in the boondocks.* (also called **the boonies**)

born – 1. [born with a silver spoon in one's mouth] born rich: → *Richard was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and has never worried about getting a job.* 2. [born yesterday] inexperienced; without good judgment: → *Eva wasn't born yesterday, so don't try to sell her your junky old car.*

bottle – 1. [a bottleneck] a place where traffic slows and gets clogged: → *There's a bottleneck on the southbound highway near the stadium, so find another route.* 2. [to bottle up] to trap or encircle: → *Don't let the enemy bottle you up in this narrow valley.*

bottom – 1. [one's bottom dollar] one's last dollar: → *I can't give you any money. I'm down to my bottom dollar.* 2. [the bottom line] the most important point: → *The bottom line is that we need to train new recruits an extra two weeks.* 3. [to get to the bottom of something] to understand something completely; to solve a mystery: → *I finally got to the bottom of why all the food kept disappearing from our refrigerator.*

to **bounce something around** – to discuss and think about an idea, project, etc.: → *We will bounce the idea around this afternoon at the meeting with the officers.*

bound – 1. [to be bound for] to be going to: → *Mr. Johnson and his family are bound for New York.* 2. [to be bound to] to probably do something: → *He's bound to pass the test; he spent all day studying for it.*

bowl – 1. [to bowl along] to move freely or quickly: → *We will bowl along once we get out of the woods.* 2. [to bowl over] to impress greatly: → *Tom's performance at the recital completely bowled us over.*

to **box in** – to shut in or keep in; to surround: → *Otto felt boxed in by the city's tall buildings.*

bragging rights – the right of the winner to gloat or feel pleasure in coming out on top: → *Our office had the most sales last month, so we'll have the nationwide bragging rights for the entire quarter.*

to **branch out** – to expand: → *This insurance company is branching out all over Texas.*

break – 1. [to break a leg] to wish good luck: → *I hope you do well tonight. Break a leg!* 2. [to break even] to gain or lose nothing in a business deal: → *We sold the car for the same amount we had paid for it, so at least we broke even.* 3. [to break one's neck] to try very hard: → *Jack nearly broke his neck trying to complete the assignment by Friday.* 4. [to break one's word or promise] to fail to do what one said or promised to do: → *You can trust him. He's a person who will not break his word.* 5. [to break out] (a) to escape: → *Some prisoners tried to break out last night.* (b) to remove from storage: → *Let's break out the medical supplies before we leave.* (c) to happen suddenly: → *Heavy firing broke out again at 0530.* (d) to develop a skin rash: → *Yesterday, I broke out in a rash after I ate some cheese.* 6. [to break someone's heart] to make someone very sad; to disappoint someone: → *It broke his heart when he had to sell the ranch.* 7. [to break the ice] to reduce the nervousness or formality of a social situation through friendly conversation: → *To break the ice at the party, Lily started telling jokes.* 8. [to break up] (a) to dismiss a unit or organization: → *The team will break up as soon as this operation is over.* (b) to end or finish something: → *Let's break up the discussion and finish this job.* (c) to start laughing: → *During the most serious part of his speech, he started breaking up.* 9. [a breakdown] (a) a nervous exhaustion or collapse: → *Henry worked so hard that he had a nervous breakdown.* (b) an analysis: → *Give me a breakdown of your requirements for next month.* (c) a failure to operate or function: → *Proper maintenance of the equipment will help prevent breakdowns.* 10. [a clean break] a total separation without any continuing connection: → *Their divorce was a clean break. He never saw her or the kids again.*

breathe – 1. [to breathe down one's neck] (a) to follow someone closely in pursuit: → *We had to make a hasty retreat. The enemy was breathing down our necks.* (b) to watch someone closely, often to make sure that things are done the way one wants: → *The boss has been breathing down Jack's neck all day over the international accounts.* 2. [to breathe freely] to relax; to feel relief from difficulty or worry: → *We couldn't breathe freely until we knew they had arrived home safely.* 3. [a breathing spell] an opportunity to rest: → *This is the first breathing spell we've had at work in three months.*

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bring – 1. [to bring about] to cause to happen: → *Drinking too much alcohol brought about his illness.* 2. [to bring down] to decrease or lower: → *The stores will bring down their prices the day after Christmas.* 3. [to bring down the house] to amuse or please an audience: → *The actors in the comedy knew that the last scene would bring down the house.* 4. [to bring home the bacon] to earn money for household expenses: → *He was quite successful in his new job and was able to bring home the bacon.* 5. [to bring out a point] to stress a certain piece of information: → *Jerry brought out an important point about the product at the sales meeting.* 6. [to bring to light] to introduce or reveal: → *The briefing brought to light several interesting facts.* 7. [to bring to mind] to remind one: → *This picture brings to mind a vacation I once took in New York.* 8. [to bring up] (a) to take care of children: → *Her children were born in Europe but were brought up in the United States.* (b) to introduce a subject: → *Soon after the discussion, Henry brought up the subject of gun control.* 9. [to bring up a point] to introduce a piece of information: → *Albert brought up a good point about the lack of support from the personnel office.*

broke – without money: → *I can't go to lunch with you. I'm broke until next payday.* (also **flat broke**)

brush – 1. [to brush aside] to ignore: → *The team brushed aside the unfavorable reports and continued to prepare for the championship game.* 2. [to brush off] to be unfriendly to: → *Marilyn brushed off the young pilot who tried to talk to her.* 3. [to brush up on something] to review: → *Before we go to class, we should brush up on the homework assignment.*

buck – 1. [to buck] to go against; to oppose: → *It would be useless to buck the decision to buy the new computers.* 2. [to buck city hall] to oppose or challenge the people in power: → *The new administrator doesn't know how hard it is to buck city hall.* 3. [to buck the system] to challenge or go against normal procedures: → *Yesterday, John bucked the system and refused to follow the usual procedures.* 4. [to buck up] to strengthen someone's courage or confidence: → *Buck up. You look so unhappy.*

a buddy – 1. a friend: → *Andrea is my best buddy.* 2. [a buddy seat] a seat for a second driver: → *The child couldn't sit in the buddy seat because it was for the other driver.* 3. [a buddy system] a procedure where two persons work near each other so that they

can give each other protection and help: → *Divers always use the buddy system; each diver looks out for the safety of his partner.*

buff – muscular: → *Dean looks buff now thanks to his repeated trips to the gym.* (also **buffed up**)

a bug/to bug – (a) to put an audio device somewhere for unauthorized listening: → *Be careful what you say. This room may be bugged.* (b) to bother: → *He might be able to do his job if you would stop bugging him.* (c) a defect; a problem: → *They found a bug in the new computer program.*

build – 1. [to build an empire] to enlarge an organization to make one's own position or job appear more important: → *Jim is building an empire by increasing his staff so quickly.* 2. [to build up] to increase forces or number of supplies or equipment: → *The president wants to build up our armed forces.*

bull – 1. [bull] information that is not true or believable: → *Fred said that he never got scared in combat, but that's a lot of bull.* 2. [a bulldog tank] an M41 or M41A1 tank: → *While in the military, John operated a bulldog tank.* 3. [bull-headed] stubborn: → *It's difficult to get a bull-headed person to change his way of doing things.*

bum – 1. [a bum rap] an unfair accusation or unfair punishment: → *Eva was given a bum rap when she was accused by Timothy of starting the fire in the building.* 2. [to bum something] to borrow or get something: → *He doesn't have any more cigarettes and is trying to bum one.* 3. [a bum steer] a bad idea or some bad advice: → *Boris gave me a bum steer with the idea to buy that land in Alaska.*

to bump into – to meet someone: → *I bumped into an old friend from college last night.*

a bumper crop – a huge amount: → *We've received a bumper crop of applications for next year's trainee positions.*

burn – 1. [to burn out] to become exhausted because of too much work, effort, or exercise: → *After spending many hours in the operating room, the doctor was burned out.* 2. [to burn rubber] to start driving a vehicle so fast that the rubber of the tires leaves a mark on the road: → *Every Saturday, those two brothers burn a lot of rubber at the motorcycle races.* 3. [to burn the candle at both ends] to make oneself very tired; to waste one's energy: → *He was burning the candle at both ends when he was*

working those two jobs last year. 4. [to burn the midnight oil] to stay up studying late at night: → *He has been **burning the midnight oil** to prepare for his finals.* 5. [to burn up the road] to drive a car very fast: → *He was so eager to get to the football game that he **burned up the road** all the way.*

burner – 1. [the back burner] treated as being of lesser importance, not needing attention now: → *We can move this project to **the back burner**. Something more important's come up.* 2. [the front burner] treated as being the most important, needing priority handling: → *Let's put this order on **the front burner**. It's top priority now.*

burst – 1. [to burst into flames] to suddenly begin to burn violently: → *The old airplane **burst into flames** when it landed.* 2. [to burst into tears/to burst out crying] to suddenly begin to cry: → *We **burst into tears** when the war veteran spoke about his treatment in the POW camp.* 3. [to burst someone's bubble] to deflate someone's hopes; to shatter someone's dreams: → *I hate to **burst your bubble**, but you're not going to get that promotion this year.*

bury – 1. [to bury one's head in the sand] to refuse to accept facts: → *The boss **buries her head in the sand** whenever we show her the low sales numbers.* 2. [to bury the hatchet] to make peace; to stop fighting: → *Last night, the boys agreed to **bury the hatchet** and become friends again.*

a busybody – one who pries into other people's private business: → *Alan is a **busybody**, always gossiping instead of working.*

butt – 1. [to butt heads with] to disagree with: → *Jim is going to **butt heads with** the lieutenant again since both of them are so stubborn.* 2. [to butt in] to interrupt or interfere in other people's business: → *Rex always **butts in** when we are having a private meeting.* 3. [to butt out] used to tell someone to get out of a private discussion, subject, or meeting: → *Oscar needs to **butt out** of my private conversations.*

butter bars – a second lieutenant: → *The new **butter bars** is a general's son.*

to butter up – to make a person feel pleased or honored, to one's advantage: → *We tried to **butter the instructor up** in order to get a good grade.*

button – 1. [on the button] correct, accurate: → *All the students' answers were right **on the button** today.* 2. [to button up] (a) to close the hatches or ports of

an armored vehicle in preparation for battle: → *When I say **button up**, be sure that everything is ready for action.* (b) to finish: → *They're working hard to **button up** the project by the end of the month.*

buy – 1. [to buy] to believe or accept: → *The boss didn't **buy** Rita's story about running out of gas on the way to work this morning.* 2. [to buy into] to believe an idea; to accept a concept: → *I don't **buy into** this idea of investing all my retirement money in the stock market.* 3. [to buy up] to purchase the entire supply: → *The man that just left the store **bought up** all the magazines that had Prince William on the cover.*

buzz – 1. [to give someone a buzz] to call someone on the phone: → *If you're going to be home tonight, I'll **give you a buzz**.* 2. [to buzz off] to go away and stop annoying someone: → *Frank wanted his brother to **buzz off** and leave him alone.*

by – 1. [by and by] a little later: → *I know you don't understand any of this now, but you'll learn it all **by and by**.* 2. [by and large] in general or on the whole: → ***By and large**, we agreed on the plan to leave at 1400.*

Student Notes

C

cabin fever – a claustrophobic reaction to being indoors too long: → *My cabin fever got so bad that I had to take a two-hour walk in the park.*

call – 1. [to be one's call] That person gets to make the decision.: → *I don't care where we go to lunch. It's your call.* 2. [to call it a day] to quit for the day: → *We have done a lot of work this afternoon on this project. Let's call it a day and go home.* 3. [to call one's bluff] to challenge; to ask someone to do what he says he'll do: → *When Valerie called Jerry's bluff, he finally admitted to her that he could not finish the project in two weeks.* 4. [to call someone on the carpet] to summon to the boss's office for a severe reprimand: → *The boss called Joe on the carpet again about his tardiness.* 5. [to call something off] to quit something; to stop; to cancel: → *We need to call off the basketball game. It's too hot to be outside.* 6. [to call the shots] to give directions; to give orders; to control: → *Ostensibly, I was in charge, but I let Joe call most of the shots.*

candle – [not able to hold a candle to] someone/something that doesn't have value when compared to someone/something else: → *When it comes to writing a good paper, Hilda can't hold a candle to Jill.* (used with a negative only)

canned – (a) something that is not original; something used for easy and general use: → *The best officers use very few canned speeches.* (b) discharged from the job: → *John won't be here anymore. He got canned yesterday right before lunch.*

card – [to put one's cards on the table] to be truthful: → *Let's both put our cards on the table and tell each other what we want.*

to (not) care for – to (not) like something: → *I don't care for fish, so please don't bake any.* (usually in the negative)

to not care less – to not be at all worried or concerned about: → *Stella couldn't care less what the new assistant thinks.* (Often misused without the negative. *I could care less about your problems.*)

carry – 1. [to carry on] to continue: → *The trainees were instructed to carry on with their drill exercises.* 2. [to carry something out] to complete or accomplish: → *You will receive the recognition after*

you've successfully carried out the assignment. 3. [to carry the ball] to take the responsibility: → *When matters become difficult at work, Peter usually carries the ball for us.*

cart – [to put the cart before/in front of the horse] to do a final step before doing the initial steps: → *Let's not train a replacement until Mr. Wood actually retires. That's putting the cart in front of the horse.*

a cash cow – an enterprise or business that keeps generating large profits: → *Because of all the sequels they're making, the original movie has turned out to be that studio's best cash cow.*

cat – 1. [a cat burglar] a burglar who enters by a high window: → *The cat burglar broke into our house through the attic window.* 2. [Cat got your tongue?] an expression that asks about the inability to speak freely because of shyness: → *Why won't you answer the question? Cat got your tongue?* 3. [more than one way to skin a cat] more than one way to do a job: → *We'll have to use another approach to get our supplies; there's more than one way to skin a cat.* 4. [to let the cat out of the bag] to reveal a secret unintentionally: → *You can mess up a good plan if you let the cat out of the bag too soon.* 5. [to look like the cat that ate the canary] to appear very proud and satisfied: → *When he won first place in the swimming competition, he looked like the cat that ate the canary.*

catch – 1. [to catch cold] to become sick with a cold: → *If you get your feet wet, you'll catch cold.* 2. [to catch fire] to ignite: → *Yesterday, when Alexandra threw a match in the trash can, it caught fire.* 3. [to catch hold of] to grasp; to understand: → *It's hard for him to catch hold of new concepts like that.* 4. [to catch on] to understand: → *That young lieutenant really caught on quickly.* 5. [to catch one's breath] to rest in order to return to normal breathing: → *He paused to catch his breath before continuing.* 6. [to catch one's eye] to get one's attention: → *Her four-carat diamond ring really caught everyone's eye.* 7. [to catch some z's] to get some sleep: → *I've just completed fifteen hours of work, so I'm going to catch some z's.*

to cave in – (a) to fall into pieces; to fall down: → *The roof caved in under the weight of the snow.* (b) to weaken and be forced to surrender: → *Eva initially disagreed with the report but eventually caved in and agreed to sign it.* (also just **to cave**) *She said she wouldn't sign it, but she caved.*

a CEO – a Chief Executive Officer: → *The CEO is going to be replaced next week.*

chalk – [to chalk something up to] to credit; to give an explanation for why something happened: → *You can chalk this mistake up to miscommunication. I didn't make myself clear.*

change – 1. [a change of heart] a change in one's opinion or idea: → *The boss was going to make us work all day Saturday, but he had a change of heart.* 2. [to change for the better] to improve: → *Once we get new computers and laser printers, things will change for the better around here.* 3. [to change hands] to change the ownership of something: → *Now that the restaurant has changed hands, the food is much better.* 4. [to change horses in midstream] to make new plans; to choose a new leader in the middle of an activity: → *Once we started the new project, we decided not to change horses in midstream.*

channels/proper channels – [to go through proper channels] to follow correct procedures through the chain of command: → *Why didn't you go through proper channels first instead of walking into the boss's office unannounced like that?*

a charley horse – a shoulder or leg muscle that aches: → *After running 3 miles, Jerry got a charley horse in his calf muscle.*

a cheap shot – a mean action or insult; something damaging to someone: → *Erica took a cheap shot at Jim when he wasn't in the office.*

check – 1. [Check!] Correct! Right!: → *Julie asked, "Is that the paper you wanted?" Rick answered, "Check!"* 2. [to check something out] to look into an issue: → *The captain said that some fuel got spilled near the runway, so check it out.* 3. [to check up on] to investigate or make sure of something: → *The sergeant will check up on the new recruits and see what they're doing.*

cheesy – of poor quality; cheap and tacky: → *Did you see those cheesy decorations in the banquet hall?*

chest – [to get something off one's chest] to tell someone about something that is bothersome or annoying: → *If you're angry at him, just tell him and get it off your chest.*

chew – 1. [to chew out] to criticize or reprimand someone loudly: → *John got chewed out for failing*

to get the necessary supplies. 2. [to chew someone/something to pieces] to become severely damaged: → *Our accurate firing chewed the enemy unit to pieces.* 3. [to chew the fat] to talk casually about nothing important: → *When George and I met at the restaurant, we spent two hours chewing the fat about our college friends.*

chicken – 1. [a chicken] a coward: → *He was a chicken and didn't go mountain climbing with us.* 2. [chicken feed] small, unimportant amounts: → *Those young boys make some money shining shoes, but it's just chicken feed.* 3. [chicken-hearted] scared of others/things: → *I can't believe Jim is a policeman. He was so chicken-hearted when he was younger.* 4. [to chicken out] to not do something because of fear: → *Steve said he was going to call in sick today, but he chickened out.* 5. [to count one's chickens before they hatch] to not unwisely depend on making a gain or profit before actually having it (usually given as advice in the negative): → *We might get a raise at the end of this month, but don't count your chickens before they hatch.* 6. [to play chicken] to dare the opponent to give in first: → *I don't think their negotiators are serious. They're playing chicken with us.*

child's play – something that is very easy to do: → *Compared with Ft. Benning, the physical training here is child's play.*

to chill out – to relax: → *Chill out. You always give a very good speech.*

chin – [to keep one's chin up] to be brave; to face a situation without fear: → *Keep your chin up! You've had worse problems than this before.*

chip – 1. [to chip in] to join with others in giving money, clothes, etc., for someone/something: → *We all chipped in to buy Jean a birthday present.* 2. [a chip off the old block] one who seems to be like his/her parent in actions or appearance: → *Adam is a chip off the old block.* 3. [to have a chip on one's shoulder] to be retaining anger because of past mistreatment: → *Bobby has a chip on his shoulder about the way he was treated as a kid.* 4. [when the chips are down] when things are going badly; during bad times: → *When the chips are down, none of these people will be willing to help you.*

to choke off – to bring to a stop: → *The plan is to choke off the first attack and defeat the enemy in the mountains.*

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to **chomp at the bit** – to wait nervously: → *Rob is chomping at the bit wanting to know what he made on yesterday's test. (also to champ)*

chopped liver – being of no importance: → *I felt like chopped liver when everyone was ignoring me.*

chow – 1. food: → *Soldiers at this base always like to complain about the chow.* 2. [to chow down] to eat: → *I'm hungry. Let's chow down on some pizza.* 3. [a chow hound] one who likes to eat: → *Bill is a chow hound. He usually eats five big meals a day.*

to **chuck out** – to throw away: → *If the information is no longer useful, you can chuck it out and we'll ask for some more reports.*

a **cinch** – an easy task to accomplish: → *Fixing the fuel pump in my old car was a cinch for a skilled mechanic like Al.*

circle – [to run around in circles] to be confused but active; to be accomplishing nothing: → *Mary was running around in circles all afternoon and got nothing done.*

circulation – [out of circulation] not out in the company of other people; not active in social life: → *Delia was ill and out of circulation for about a month.*

civies – civilian clothes: → *Colonel Salinas is allowing military personnel to wear their civies to the picnic this Friday. (also civvies)*

to **clam up** – to become or remain silent: → *When the police attempted to question him, he clammed up and wouldn't say a word.*

clean – 1. [a clean bill of health] a document or report given when a person or animal has no disease or infection; proof of favorable results: → *After Jerry's physical examination, the doctor gave him a clean bill of health.* 2. [a clean break] a total separation with no more contact: → *Once he graduated from high school, he made a clean break and never saw any of his friends again.* 3. [clean-cut] neat; specific; distinct: → *We need a clean-cut person to give the mission briefing.* 4. [to clean house] to make major changes: → *When the new boss takes over, he'll probably clean house in this division.* 5. [to clean someone out] to use up all of someone's money: → *Buying that expensive house cleaned us out.* 6. [to clean up one's act] to change negative behavior to positive behavior: → *You need*

to clean up your act and start making good grades. 7. [to come clean] to confess: → *We know you robbed the bank. Why don't you just come clean?*

cleaners – [to take someone to the cleaners] to cheat someone out of a lot of money: → *The investment broker took me to the cleaners once I foolishly put my money in his account.*

clear – 1. [clear-cut] definite; without any uncertainty: → *John has a clear-cut plan of action.* 2. [to clear the decks] to make major preparations for action: → *Before we can work on this book, we need to clear the decks of all other projects.* 3. [to clear the table] to remove the dishes, glasses, forks, spoons, etc., from the table: → *The waitress finally cleared the table and gave us menus.* 4. [to clear up] (a) to explain; to solve: → *Let's clear up this point before we discuss the next item.* (b) to become good weather with no rain/big clouds: → *It looks like the sky is going to clear up, so we can play the game after all.* 5. [in the clear] free of obligation or anything that restricts action: → *Herman's finally in the clear now that he's paid off all his bills.*

to **click** – to fit or go well together: → *That new unit really clicked and finished the mission quickly.*

cloak-and-dagger – spying or intelligence work: → *Alexandra was in the cloak-and-dagger business before she quit and became a teacher.*

a **clock watcher** – a bad worker who is more concerned with leaving work than doing a good job: → *Unfortunately, many of the new workers are clock watchers and run out of here at 4:00.*

close – 1. [a close call/a close shave] a narrow escape: → *That was a close call. That kid almost got hit by a car.* 2. [to close ranks] to come together, especially for fighting; to work together: → *The soldiers had to close ranks in order to defend themselves.* 3. [to be or hit close to home] to touch someone emotionally: → *That scene where the grandmother died really hit close to home.* 4. [to close up] to narrow the distance: → *Close up! You're flying too far apart.* 5. [to keep a close eye/to keep a close watch] to watch carefully; to look after carefully: → *Keep a close watch on your luggage. There are a lot of thieves around here.*

cloud – 1. [to cloud the issue] to confuse matters: → *Don't cloud the issue by talking about other battles.* 2. [on cloud nine] experiencing complete happiness: → *Dean's on cloud nine because of his*

promotion. 3. [under a cloud] under suspicion: → *James will be **under a cloud** until he is proven innocent.*

to clown around – to not be serious about something; to have fun: → *My roommate is seldom serious about anything; he's always **clowning around**.*

to clutter up – to include too many details: → *The map will be hard to read if you **clutter it up** with all these red lines.*

cold – 1. [cold feet] nervous and not wanting to make an important decision: → *The groom got **cold feet** and left Tina at the altar.* 2. [a cold war] an ideological struggle without actual fighting: → *Those two countries carried on a **cold war** for several years.* 3. [in cold blood] without feeling; in a cruel way: → *He was killed **in cold blood** by a carjacker.* 4. [to have something down cold] to be very familiar with something: → *He **has the basics of flying down cold**, so let's put him in a plane today.*

colors – [with flying colors] with highest honors; with glory: → *She graduated from law school **with flying colors**.*

come – 1. [to come again] to repeat something: → ***Come again?** Did I hear you correctly?* 2. [to come clean] to tell the truth; to admit one did something wrong: → *The clerks need to **come clean** about the missing books.* 3. [to come down with something] to become sick with: → *Mary has a fever; she must be **coming down with the flu**.* 4. [Come on!] an exclamation of disapproval or disbelief: → ***Come on!** Do you expect me to believe that?* 5. [to come out of one's shell] to stop being shy: → *We got Frank to **come out of his shell** and talk to people at the party.* 6. [to come out smelling like a rose] to be free of blame or guilt in a situation: → *The scandal is so bad that no one can possibly **come out smelling like a rose**.* 7. [to come to one's senses] to think clearly again; to behave as one should: → *He finally **came to his senses** and stopped buying antique clocks.* 8. [to come to terms] to reach an agreement: → *The men finally **came to terms** on the price of the car.* 9. [to come up in the world] to gain success, wealth, or importance in life: → *He has certainly **come up in the world**. I knew him when he was very poor.* 10. [to come up with] to announce or offer: → *I'm sure Jim will **come up with** a new proposal by next week.* 11. [to come up with the solution] to find an answer; to solve: → *Did Jean **come up with the solution** to your problem?*

con – 1. [a con] a convict; a prisoner: → *Two **cons** escaped from prison last night.* 2. [to con someone] to cheat someone (from the phrase "confidence game," meaning the act of cheating someone): → *He tried to **con me out of** my sandwich by saying he hadn't eaten for twelve hours.*

cook – 1. [to cook one's goose] to ruin one's opportunity: → *The boy knew that once he broke the rules, his parents were going to **cook his goose**.* 2. [to cook up] to create; to plan and organize; to invent: → *I have to **cook up** an excuse for being late for work again tomorrow.* 3. [Too many cooks (spoil the broth).] a proverb meaning that if too many people are involved in one project, it will not turn out very good.: → *At least ten different people tried writing that horrible manual, which is a good example of **too many cooks**.*

cookie – [That's how/the way the cookie crumbles.] That's how it is, and one has to accept it: → *I didn't get the promotion, but **that's how the cookie crumbles**.*

cool – 1. [cool as a cucumber] calm or unexcited: → *During the argument, Jessie stayed as **cool as a cucumber**.* 2. [to cool it] to relax; to stop being angry or excited: → *You need to **cool it** and leave the meeting.* 3. [to cool one's heels] to be kept waiting: → *The secretary made us **cool our heels** in an outer office before she let us in.*

to cop an attitude – to dislike and complain about a situation: → *That teenager **copped an attitude** when told he would have to go to the end of the waiting line.*

to cop out – to avoid trouble and responsibility: → *When I needed help, my boss **copped out** and left early.*

a copycat – a person who imitates someone else's manner, style, or behavior: → *This child is such a **copycat**; he'll say whatever you say.*

cornered – without a hope of escape: → *Once he was **cornered** in an alley, the robber surrendered to police.*

cost – 1. [at all cost/costs] by any way necessary; regardless of the effort: → *We must complete this report **at all costs**.* 2. [to cost an arm and a leg] to be extremely expensive: → *That shirt **cost me an arm and a leg**, but it was worth it.* 3. [It will cost someone.] an expression meaning someone will be

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indebted to return a big favor: → *If I finish your report for you, it'll cost you.*

a couch potato – someone who spends too much time watching TV and not exercising: → *Jay is a real couch potato. He's gained fifty pounds.*

to cough something up – (a) to admit something: → *The chief will find out what happened one way or another, so why don't you cough up the information?* (b) to contribute; to pay; to give without wanting to: → *Elsa needs to cough up some money for the party.*

count – 1. [to count sheep] to try to fall asleep without success: → *I tried counting sheep, but I was still wide awake at 4 a.m.* 2. [to count on someone/something] to depend on; to rely on: → *You can count on him to do his part.* 3. [to count someone in] to include someone: → *If you all are going to the pizza place for lunch, count me in.* 4. [to count someone out] to exclude someone: → *Count me out on the dinner plans. I don't have enough money.* 5. [Who's counting?] a sarcastic way of letting someone know that you are keeping track of things: → *This is at least the tenth time that I've driven everybody to lunch, but who's counting?*

cover – 1. [to cover a lot of ground] (a) to move rapidly over land: → *We'll have to cover a lot of ground to get back to base before dark.* (b) to discuss a large amount of something: → *The new instructor covers a lot of ground in one hour.* 2. [to cover for someone] to take another person's duties or responsibilities: → *Jan has to be away next week, so she asked Robert to cover for her.* 3. [to cover the high points] to discuss the main items: → *In his briefing, he covered only the high points because he had only 15 minutes.* 4. [to run for cover] to run to shelter for protection: → *When the storm hit, we had to run for cover.* (also to **take cover**)

cow – 1. [till the cows come home] for a long time; until everyone is finished: → *I could've sat there and played cards till the cows came home, but everybody else voted to quit.* 2. [to have a cow] to get upset in an overly dramatic way; to overreact: → *When I said I wanted to borrow the car, I thought my mom was going to have a cow.*

crack – 1. [to crack a joke] to tell a funny story: → *Jack makes everyone laugh when he cracks jokes about his hometown.* 2. [to crack a smile] to show amusement: → *He could tell the funniest stories and never crack a smile.* 3. [a crackdown] enforcing the

rules or laws more strictly than in the past: → *After several incidents, the commander imposed a crackdown on parties in the VOQ.* 4. [to crack up] (a) to have a physical or mental collapse: → *Jim will crack up if he continues to work so hard.* (b) to laugh without control: → *That comedian is so funny. I crack up the minute he starts talking.* 5. [cracked up] something favorably described or presented, usually used in the negative: → *The life of a Foreign Legionnaire is not what it's cracked up to be.*

to cram – to learn as much as possible within a very short period of time: → *Johnny tried cramming for his exam last night, but he fell asleep at the desk.*

crank – 1. [to crank out] to produce: → *That factory can crank out 35,000 cans of soup an hour.* 2. [to crank up] to start; to begin operation: → *The new unit will crank up early next week.*

crash – 1. [a crash course] a short course that gives a lot of information in a very short time: → *Tom needs to take a crash course in Spanish if he's going to Peru next month.* 2. [to crash] (a) to fall asleep: → *When we got home, we were all so tired that we crashed immediately.* (b) to fail and not be working anymore (used with computer systems): → *My computer is in the repair shop; it crashed again over the weekend.* 3. [to crash and burn] to completely fail: → *Ernie crashed and burned with his poor presentation at the conference last month.*

to be crazy about – to have a very strong interest or liking in someone/something: → *Joe is crazy about opera.*

the cream of the crop – the best of the best: → *That university accepts only the cream of the crop.*

creek – [up a creek without a paddle] in difficulty or trouble with no solution: → *I was up a creek without a paddle when my car broke down in the mountains.*

a creep – an unpleasant, strange, or bad person: → *What are we going to do with this creep that just joined the squadron?*

crocodile tears – false tears; pretended grief: → *Jeremy shed crocodile tears over the death of his rich uncle.*

to crop up – to appear suddenly: → *You should learn how to solve this problem in case it ever crops up again.*

cross – 1. [to cross one's fingers] to hope for good luck: → *Cross your fingers and hope he'll pass the test.* 2. [to cross one's mind] to briefly think about something, often in the negative: → *It never crossed my mind that he might have wanted to go to lunch with us.* 3. [to cross someone's heart] to promise that something is true: → *Do you cross your heart that you won't tell this secret to anyone?* 4. [to cross swords with] to have an argument with; to fight with: → *Don't cross swords with the new supply officer. He has a temper.* 5. [to cross that bridge when one comes to it] to deal with an issue later at the proper time: → *Don't worry about creating the index yet. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.*

crud – an excess of corrosion or grease; anything not liked: → *All the crud in this pipe is making the water run slowly.*

crummy – of poor quality or appearance: → *The rooms were clean, but the beds were crummy, so we didn't sleep well last night.*

cry – 1. [a crybaby] a person who becomes upset and complains a lot: → *He's a crybaby, always complaining when his team loses.* 2. [to cry on someone's shoulder] to go to someone to talk about a problem: → *Solve your own problems and don't come crying on my shoulder.* 3. [to cry wolf] to warn others of a danger that one knows is not there; to give a false alarm: → *He has cried wolf so many times that no one ever believes anything he says now.*

crying – 1. [a crying shame] an obvious mistake that should be corrected: → *It's a crying shame to send men into the field before they are properly trained.* 2. [for crying out loud] an exclamation indicating complaint: → *Sylvia yelled, "Oh, for crying out loud! Stop making that noise!"*

crystal clear – without doubt; understandable: → *Mr. Martinez made it crystal clear that we had to go to the meeting.*

cuff – [off the cuff] not prepared ahead of time: → *Henry made those remarks off the cuff, so we need to look at the records.*

one's **cup of tea** – what one likes to do (more often used in the negative): → *Playing football is not my cup of tea.*

a **curtain of fire** – very heavy artillery; shellfire: → *The soldiers had to retreat after they came under a heavy curtain of fire.*

a **curve ball** – an unfair solution; a trick: → *The instructor threw us a curve ball on the test.*

to **cuss someone out** – to curse at someone; to say bad things to: → *Michele really cussed out the personnel official.*

cut – 1. [cut and dry] very clear and understandable; unchanging: → *The captain's briefing was cut and dry.* 2. [to cut back] to decrease: → *Peter is trying to quit smoking, so he's cut back a little.* 3. [to cut class] to be absent from class without permission: → *I don't feel like listening to the math teacher today, so I think I'll cut class.* 4. [to cut corners] to save effort or cost: → *Mary's dad told her that she would have to cut corners on buying clothes if she wanted to go to college in the fall.* 5. [Cut it out!] Stop it!: → *Cut it out! That loud singing bothers me.* 6. [to cut loose] to become free and independent: → *Jack wanted to cut loose from his parents and do things on his own.* 7. [to cut off one's nose to spite one's face] to make things worse for oneself because of anger or frustration that should be directed at someone else: → *When Ed's mother wouldn't let him surf the Web late at night, he cut off his nose to spite his face by breaking the keyboard.* 8. [to be cut out for something] to be properly suited to do something: → *Jane isn't cut out for teaching; she doesn't have the patience to work with students.* 9. [to cut someone down to size] to reduce a person's opinion of herself/himself: → *If you keep telling people how great you are, someone is going to cut you down to size.* 10. [to cut something to the bone] to reduce to a minimum: → *This project is costing too much money, so we've got to cut expenses to the bone.* 11. [to make the cut] to not be eliminated yet; to be good enough to continue: → *It looks like twenty-two applicants are going to make the final cut.*

cutthroat – very severe; savage: → *Their business suffered because of the cutthroat competition.*

cutting edge – the latest, most advanced stage of something, such as technology: → *The salespeople swear that my new dashboard CD player represents the cutting edge of new design.*

a **cutup** – a person who doesn't have a mature or serious attitude; a joker: → *We need a serious person for this project, not a cutup like Frank.*

Student Notes

D

a daisy – 1. [(as) fresh as a daisy] bright, alert, and not tired: → *You look **as fresh as a daisy** this morning.* 2. [to push up daisies] to be dead and buried in the ground: → *If his father catches him staying out all night again, he'll be **pushing up daisies**.*

damned if you do, damned if you don't – likely to be criticized equally by those who are for it and those who are against it: ➔ *It'll be hard to make a decision about this because you're **damned if you do, and damned if you don't**.*

dark – 1. [a dark horse] a political candidate unknown to the general voting public: ➔ *Andy is an great candidate for mayor, but he's considered a **dark horse** by all the news media.* 2. [in the dark] not knowing something; being in ignorance: ➔ *Mike is **in the dark** about the new policies and won't know what to do.*

date – 1. [out of date] no longer useful or fashionable: → *This instruction manual is **out of date**.* 2. [up to date] new; most recent: → *This repair manual doesn't seem to be **up to date**.*

day – 1. [day by day] gradually: → *Day by day, his health seems to be improving.* 2. [day in and day out] all the time for many days: → *Jim is preoccupied with tennis. He plays it **day in and day out**.* 3. [an off day] a day when one is not doing things at his/her best: → *He was obviously having an **off day**; otherwise, he would have finished that report.* 4. [one's days being numbered] not being at a place much longer: → *After his latest managerial mistakes, I fear his **days are numbered** around here.*

dead – 1. [dead ahead] directly in front of: ➔ *You're going the correct way; headquarters is **dead ahead** three blocks.* 2. [a dead duck] someone who is in a very bad situation: ➔ *You are a **dead duck** if you hand your rough draft in instead of a finished product.* 3. [a dead give away] something that shows the truth: ➔ *We found warm food on the table - a **dead give away** that the guerrillas had left in a hurry.* 4. [dead in the water] defeated; in a bad position: ➔ *We should prepare for this mission, or we'll be **dead in the water**.* 5. [a dead ringer] someone who physically looks like someone else: ➔ *He's a **dead ringer** for the captain; he must be his brother.* 6. [to be dead to the world] to sleep deeply; to be unconscious: ➔ *My brother didn't get to bed until three in the morning, so he's still **dead to the world**.* 7. [dead weight] worthless; making no contribution to the present need: ➔ *I'm going to transfer him. He's **dead weight** in this unit.* 8. [deadpan] showing no emotions: ➔ *I didn't know what Juanita thought about the story from her **deadpan** reaction.* 9. [deadwood] anything worthless; useless: ➔ *Otto contributes nothing to this unit. He's **deadwood**.* 10. [over my dead body] a phrase meaning something is not going to happen as long as you're alive to prevent it: ➔ *My son wants to drop out of high school and become a rock singer, but it'll be **over my dead body**!*

deal – 1. [deal me in] include me: → *If you are going to the game, then **deal me in**.* 2. [deal me out] exclude me; don't depend or rely on me: → ***Deal me out** for dinner tonight. I'm too tired.* 3. [to deal with] to do business with someone; to work with a situation: → *I have to **deal with** some expired accounts today.*

deep – 1. [deep pockets] wealthy; having lots of available money: → *The personnel office had **deep pockets**, so I couldn't fight them anymore in court.* 2. [deep trouble] very serious trouble: → *The young boys are in **deep trouble** for skipping school again.*

a dent – [to make a dent in] to make a slight gain: → *We're slowly **making a dent** in this pile of folders.*

the devil's advocate – one who argues the opposite side of a subject in order to show more/different information: → *Our instructor always plays **devil's advocate** to see if we're sure of our opinions.*

a diamond – [a diamond in the rough] someone who will later become very good or very special: → *The basketball coach swears the new player is a **diamond in the rough**.*

to be to die for – to be the best; to be heavenly: → *This lemon pie is **to die for**.*

different strokes for different folks – “Everyone has different interests and likes.”: → *There are **different strokes for different folks**, so not everyone will like this restaurant.*

to dig up – to discover or find: → *The investigator **dug up** some information on an old murder case.*

a dime a dozen – common; not valuable: → *Souvenir shops are a **dime a dozen** in tourist towns.*

dirty work – very hard, tiring work: → *Give George the **dirty work** of finishing the reports.*

to dis (diss) – to say or do something that's interpreted as disrespectful or disparaging: → *I can't believe the way he **dissed** you in front of everyone.*

a disconnect – a failure to communicate properly because of a misunderstanding. → *There was a **disconnect** somewhere between the manager and the supervisors, so no one ever got the correct word.*

to divvy up – to divide and distribute: → *The kids will **divvy up** the candy.*

DOA – abbreviation for the medical term Dead on Arrival (at the hospital): → *That particular piece of legislation will be **DOA** by the time it hits the President's desk.*

do/don't – 1. [do's and don't's] rules and regulations: → *Before we start class, I have to read you a bunch of **do's and don't's** that we all have to follow.* 2. [Don't go there!] a warning not to bring up

a sensitive topic: → *Everyone will want to talk about his divorce, but **don't go there! Don't even go there!*** 3. [nothing doing] an expression meaning the speaker wants no part of it; absolutely not: → *He wants to borrow my car. I said, “**Nothing doing.**”* 4. [That does it!] an exclamation meaning the speaker has had enough; the situation has reached its final moment; the speaker can't take it any longer: → *She says I have to rewrite the report again! **That does it!*** 5. [to do a number on] to confuse or defeat in an unfair way: → *That salesman really **did a number on** you. I wouldn't have bought that car.* 6. [to do oneself proud] to accomplish something worthy of praise: → *You **did yourself proud** with your speech.* 7. [to do well by someone] to fulfill obligations; to provide benefits and support: → *That company **does well by** its employees. You should apply for a job there.*

dog – 1. [dog days] the time of year when it's extremely hot and humid: → *I like San Antonio, but I hate those **dog days** of summer.* 2. [dog eat dog] ready and willing to fight others to get what you

want: → *Bob has a **dog eat dog** attitude; he'll fight for what he wants.* 3. [dog tags] military identification tags: → *The recruits were told to wear their **dog tags** at all times.* 4. [dog-tired] very tired; exhausted: → *How can we avoid being **dog-tired** when we're working all the time?* 5. [Doggone it!] an expression that shows disgust: → *"**Doggone it!**" Sammy shouted. "I can't do much work because of my sore leg."* 6. [doggy bag] a plastic or paper bag given to a restaurant customer to take home uneaten food: → *The servings were so big that I took home a **doggy bag**.* 7. [in the doghouse] in disfavor or disgrace: → *The whole team is **in the doghouse** with the coach because of curfew violations.*

to doll up – to dress in one's best clothes: → *The young girls were **dolled up** for the party.*

done for – defeated; finished: → *We'll be **done for** if we don't get back to base by 1400.*

doornail – [as dead as a doornail] completely dead; without any hope: → *Since I failed my last training course, my promotion hopes are **as dead as a doornail**.*

a dose of one's own medicine – the same negative way you treat another: → *The professor gave his students a **dose of their own medicine** when he started asking “Huh?” each time someone made a comment.*

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to **double-cross** – to betray someone; to cheat someone: → *Brenda double-crossed Dave when she told her boss every negative thing Dave had said about the company.*

to **double dip** – to work one job but draw two salaries (one of which might be a pension from retirement): → *Mr. Jones is the only one in this office who double dips. He retired from the Air Force after twenty-one years and then came to work for us.*

down – 1. [down and out] poor and hopeless: → *Henry was really down and out after he lost his job.* 2. [down in the dumps] sad or discouraged: → *After the team lost the game, the players were down in the dumps.* 3. [down the drain] lost without the possibility of regaining: → *If you continue to spend so much on entertainment, all your money will go down the drain.* 4. [down the home stretch] near the end of a project or operation: → *We've finished the hardest part of the assignment, and now we're heading down the home stretch.* 5. [down to business] beginning to work seriously: → *If he wants to pass this course, he should get down to business and start studying.* 6. [down to earth] practical or sensible: → *I like the new secretary; she's very friendly and down to earth.* 7. [down to the wire] at the last possible moment: → *We are getting down to the wire, so let's hurry and finish.*

drag – 1. [to drag] to slow down; to hold back: → *Keep moving! I know you are tired, but this is not the time to drag.* 2. [to drag in] to introduce without good reason: → *Don't drag in the question of supplies before you know how much money we will get.* 3. [to drag on/out] to last a long time: → *The meeting may drag on for hours.* 4. [to drag one's tail] to be slow and inefficient: → *The men were dragging their tails and couldn't get the job done.*

draw – 1. [to draw a blank] to be unable to remember something: → *I saw the questions on the test, and I drew a blank even though I had studied all night.* 2. [to draw the line] to set a limit: → *The boss doesn't object to a few parties, but she draws the line when her staff arrives late the next day.*

the **drawing board** – [back to the drawing board] planning again because the first effort failed: → *Since Plan B didn't work at all, let's go back to the drawing board.*

to **dream up** – to invent; to create in the mind: → *The students dreamed up a good story about why they were late.*

to be **dressed to kill** – to be wearing one's best or finest clothing: → *Ben was dressed to kill in a red tuxedo at last night's party.*

drift – [the general drift] the main idea: → *I don't remember any specifics, but I did catch the general drift of his comments.*

drive – 1. [a drive] a sustained operation; an attack: → *We are ready to start the drive at 0400.* 2. [to drive home] to make obvious; to stress a point: → *I want to drive this point home to everyone: we cannot leave early today.* 3. [to drive someone mad] to cause someone to become violently angry or insane: → *His lack of responsibility is enough to drive me mad.* 4. [to drive someone up the wall] to bother; to annoy: → *The baby's constant crying drove me up the wall.* 5. [to be driving at] to try or want to say; to mean: → *Did you understand what the instructor was driving at?*

drop – 1. [to drop dead] an exclamation of refusal or deep disapproval; to go away and leave someone alone: → *Valerie told him to drop dead after he made that rude remark to her.* 2. [a drop in the bucket] a small or inadequate amount: → *We didn't collect enough money for the party. What we got was just a drop in the bucket.* 3. [a drop-off point] (a) a delivery area: → *We must have reached the drop-off point for the supplies.* (b) the point where efficiency begins to decrease: → *We must have reached the drop-off point since we aren't making any more progress.* 4. [to drop out of] to discontinue attending: → *Margarita dropped out of training because she was very ill and was in the hospital for a few weeks.* 5. [to drop someone a line] to write a short note/letter: → *I hope Jim will drop us a line while he's on vacation.* 6. [to drop the ball] to make a mistake that stops progress: → *Lena dropped the ball and forgot to tell us about the meeting.*

a **dry run** – a rehearsal: → *Before we tape the performance, let's have a dry run of it.*

duck – 1. [a lame duck] a public official who has lost an election, or is ineligible by law to seek reelection for another term, but is serving out a term: → *The governor is a lame duck and won't be able to accomplish much now.* 2. [a sitting duck] unguarded; an easy target: → *I felt like a sitting duck when I was*

waiting by the side of the road for the rest of my unit to arrive. 3. [to have one's ducks in a row] to be fully prepared or organized: → *The Commandant wants every department to have their **ducks in a row** for this year's inspection.*

a **dud** – an item that doesn't function in a proper manner; a boring person: → *George told me that cell phone may be a **dud**, so we need to go to supply and get another one.*

Student Notes

E

an **eager beaver** – a person who is extremely enthusiastic: → *Joe is such an **eager beaver**. Have you noticed how he always comes to work early and stays late?*

an **eagle eye** – someone who is very good at noticing or seeing things: → *Capt Flores is such an **eagle eye**, so be careful to proofread all your reports.*

ear – 1. [an earful] more than one wants to hear: → *I only asked him how he likes his new job, but I got an **earful**.* 2. [to earmark for] to keep for a specific purpose: → *These supplies are **earmarked** for the Navy.* 3. [one's ears were burning] to have just been talking about someone who has now arrived: → *Were your **ears burning** about two minutes ago? We were talking about you again.* 4. [to be all ears] to be listening carefully: → *We were **all ears** when the captain told us about his trip to the Caribbean.* 5. [up to one's ears in something] being very busy with something: → *Herman is **up to his ears in** work; he won't be able to attend the seminar.*

earn – 1. [to earn one's keep] to work very hard: → *He **earns** his **keep** by solving a lot of the problems around here.* 2. [to earn one's salt] to be worth one's salary: → *They didn't do enough work today to **earn** their **salt**.*

easy – 1. [Easy come, easy go.] Something that one gets easily/quickly can be lost or spent just as easily.: → *Julia never thinks about money; for her it's **easy come, easy go**.* 2. [easygoing] relaxed or unexcited: → *He's a **calm, easygoing** type of person.* 3. [easy street] a place or feeling of comfort: → *When I win the lottery, I'm going to live on **easy street** for the rest of my life.*

eat – 1. [to eat away] to corrode or slowly destroy: → *The rust has **eaten away** the pipes in that new building.* 2. [to eat crow] to apologize; to admit one is wrong: → *Robert had to **eat crow** and apologize for all the bad things he said about Pam.* 3. [to eat in] to eat at home: → *We prefer to **eat in** on Fridays.* 4. [to eat one's heart out] to be jealous; to want what one cannot have: → *They won't let him have that assignment in Rome, and it's **eating his heart out**.* 5. [to eat one's words] to apologize; to withdraw a statement: → *When they showed him he was wrong, he was forced to **eat his words**.* 6. [to eat one out of house and home] to eat large quantities of food: → *The grandkids will probably **eat us out of house and home**.* 7. [to eat out] to eat in a restaurant: → *We love to **eat out** on the weekends.*

egg – 1. [to egg on] to urge: → *Alexander wouldn't have stolen the money, but his friend **egged him on**.* 2. [an egghead] an overly-intellectual person: → *Anthony is such an **egghead** with all those university degrees of his.* 3. [to have egg on one's face] to be very embarrassed: → *I guess you **have egg on** your **face** after saying what you did about the general to his wife.* 4. [to put all of one's eggs in one basket] to

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risk everything on one effort or operation; to concentrate all resources and supplies in one place: → *I don't want to **put all my eggs in one basket** with this supply order. Let's buy some of the stuff from two other companies.*

the **eight ball** – [behind the eight ball] in an unpleasant situation or awkward position: → *I wasn't prepared to answer the judge's questions, so I felt **behind the eight ball** for a few minutes.*

empty – [to run on empty] to operate without fuel: → *I forgot to eat breakfast or lunch, so I'm **running on empty** right now.*

end – 1. [at the end of one's rope] having no more patience; exhausted emotionally: → *The computers are down. I need copies of the report immediately. I'm **at the end of my rope**.* 2. [at wit's end] not knowing what to do next; having used up all of one's alternatives: → *I've looked everywhere for those car keys. I'm **at my wit's end**.* 3. [the end of the road] the conclusion of a project; the point after which nothing else can be done: → *I think we've reached **the end of the road** in this discussion.* 4. [the end of the world] a crisis that is being exaggerated by an overly dramatic person: → *So, someone left a window unlocked last night. It's not exactly **the end of the world**.* 5. [an end product] the finished product; the result: → *The **end product** of all our work was that our suggestions were approved.* 6. [to make ends meet] to meet one's financial obligations: → *They can't **make both ends meet**; therefore, they're going to get a loan.* 7. [to put an end to something] to stop: → *We need to **put an end** to this fighting and come to a decision.*

an **envelope** – [to push the envelope] to test the boundaries of what is acceptable or normal: → *No other film director **pushes the envelope** quite the way he does.*

eye – 1. [to eye] to consider as a possibility: → *He is **eying** the possibility of changing the whole training program.* 2. [to eyeball] to look at closely: → *Get someone to **eyeball** your report before you turn it in to me this afternoon.* 3. [eyeball-to-eyeball] face-to-face: → *We fought **eyeball-to-eyeball** during the assault.* 4. [an eye-opener] a surprise; an experience that makes one aware of something: → *Seeing the film on drug addiction was an **eye-opener** to all of them.* 5. [eyes being bigger than one's stomach] when one takes more food than can be eaten: → *I couldn't eat everything at lunch; I guess my **eyes were bigger than my stomach**.* 6. [eyewash] information used to

hide the truth: → *I want the facts without all this **eyewash**.* 7. [to keep an eye out for something] to be alert and watchful for: → *I want a copy of that book, so **keep an eye out for it** when you go shopping.*

Student Notes

F

face – 1. [face down] with the head or face turned down: → *All the magazines on the table were turned **face down**.* 2. [to face the music] to face a difficult situation with courage: → *Lisa had to **face the music** and tell her dad that she had broken the camera.* 3. [face to face] meeting each other: → *They were surprised when they came **face to face** with the enemy.* 4. [to keep a straight face] to not betray emotion; to keep from laughing: → *It was hard to **keep a straight face** when Joe was telling everyone about the extra work we were supposedly getting.* 5. [to lose face] to be embarrassed or to feel humiliated: → *He can't admit he was lying since he*

wouldn't want to **lose face**. 6. [to save face] to avoid being embarrassed or humiliated: → *Isn't there some way he can resign but still **save face**?*

fair – 1. [fair and square] honestly: → *He won the chess game **fair and square***. 2. [fair game] a target that is not off-limits, especially to criticism or humor: → *Everything the politicians do is **fair game** now*. 3. [fair is fair] a statement meaning that what someone did can now be answered the same way: → *I worked your shift last week, so you can work mine next week. **Fair is fair***. 4. [fair play] unbiased treatment; honest equality: → *We hope all their campaign ads will show a spirit of true **fair play***. 5. [a fair-weather friend] someone who supports you only when things are going fine; someone who deserts you during bad times: → *I thought I had a lot of buddies in this unit, but they all turned out to be **fair-weather friends** when I needed economic assistance*. 6. [to get a fair shake] to receive honest treatment; to be dealt with in an unbiased way: → *Don't worry. You'll get a **fair shake** from that judge*. 7. [more than one's fair share] to receive a larger portion than other people: → *I seem to have gotten **more than my fair share** of files to process today*.

fall – 1. [to fall apart] (a) to become disorganized: → *The troops **fell apart** under the constant bombing*. (b) in need of repair: → *That old house is dangerous to walk into. It's practically **falling apart***. 2. [to fall asleep] to go to sleep: → *The baby **fell asleep** before he finished drinking all of his bottle*. 3. [to fall down on the job] to fail to work well: → *Ted's work is getting worse; he has **fallen down on the job***. 4. [to fall flat on one's face] to fail: → *Todd **fell flat on his face** when he tried to brief the VIPs*. 5. [to fall head over heels] (a) to become deeply in love: → *Joe **fell head over heels** for her*. (b) to fall: → *Michael got hurt when he **fell head over heels** down the stairs*. 6. [to fall in love with] to become in love: → *His brother **fell in love with** Susanna when they first met*. 7. [to fall to pieces] to break up completely: → *The soccer team **fell to pieces** after the coach quit*. 8. [a falling out] an argument; a disagreement: → *Dave and Juan had a **falling out** about who would go to Dallas this week*. 9. [fallout] the result or effect of something: → *The **fallout** from the meeting was that we had to start a new program*.

family – 1. [a family tree] one's ancestors and descendants: → *We have now documented six generations of our **family tree***. 2. [something runs in one's family] something is characteristic of one's

family: → *The professor said that artistic talent **runs in Annette's family***.

to **fan out** – to scatter according to plan: → *Stay close together through the towns, but **fan out** when you reach open country*.

far – 1. [as far as one knows] based on all the information someone has: → *The boss will be out for the rest of the week **as far as** we know*. 2. [far and away] very much so: → *That was, **far and away**, the most difficult test I've ever taken*. 3. [far and wide] over a large area: → *The store clerks searched **far and wide** and never were able to find a Swedish-Italian dictionary*. 4. [far be it from me] an expression meaning "I probably shouldn't say this, but I'm going to anyway": → ***Far be it from me** to criticize his appearance, but did you see his hair this morning?* 5. [far-fetched] exaggerated: → *His story was too **far-fetched** to be true*. 6. [to go far enough] to include all the necessary information; to say everything that needs to be said: → *I'm glad you complained about how dirty the rooms are, but you didn't go **far enough***. 7. [to go too far] to add something that should not have been said: → *I'm glad you complained about working conditions, but you did go **too far** when you started naming specific people*.

fast food – quick preparation and service of food: → *We can always stop at a **fast food** place to get a quick meal*.

Fat chance(!) – There is no possibility of that!: → ***Fat chance** the boss'll let us leave early!*

feast or famine – all or nothing; situations which have extremes: → *Business has been **feast or famine** lately; some days we sell a lot, and other days we sell nothing*.

feather – 1. [a feather in one's cap] a proud achievement: → *The boss told Albert that finishing all those reports in such a short time would be a real **feather in his cap***. 2. [to feather one's nest] to earn extra money by violating a position of trust: → *The politician was supposedly representing his community during the contract talks, but he was only **feathering his own nest***.

feed – 1. [to feed someone a line] to lie to someone: → *You can't believe Alexander; he'll just **feed you a line***. 2. [to be fed up] to be disgusted: → *Pete was so **fed up** with his old car that he sold it to his neighbor*.

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feel – 1. [to feel it in one's bones] to have a feeling that something is about to happen: → *I know that everything is going to be all right. I can feel it in my bones.* 2. [to feel like a million dollars] to be in the best of health and spirit: → *I didn't feel good yesterday after work, but today I feel like a million dollars.* 3. [to feel up to something] to be able to do something: → *I don't feel up to walking today. I'm really too tired.*

feet – [to drag one's feet] to be slow; to be tardy: → *They were supposed to sign the contract five weeks ago. I don't know why they keep dragging their feet.*

fence – 1. [to fence in] to enclose; to limit: → *Working in a small office always made him feel fenced in.* 2. [on the fence] undecided or neutral: → *He's on the fence about whether to join the Army or the Navy.*

a fender-bender – a minor automobile accident: → *Traffic was really slow on the freeway this afternoon because of a few fender-benders.*

few and far between – not many; few: → *The experienced clerks in this new store are few and far between.*

to fiddle around – to waste time: → *Let's stop fiddling around and finish this assignment.*

a field day – [to have a field day] to have things entirely as one wants; to satisfy oneself freely and successfully; to have a good time at someone else's expense: → *The newspapers had a field day with all of the mayor's scandals last year.*

to fight tooth and nail – to fight heavily and/or closely: → *When the boy was attacked by the others, he fought tooth and nail to escape.*

figures – [That figures!] That's to be expected!: → *Anna got promoted? That figures. She's the hardest worker in that office. (also It figures!)*

fill – 1. [to fill someone's shoes] to take someone's place, especially in a job: → *Once he retires, I doubt if we'll ever be able to find anyone to fill his shoes.* 2. [to fill the bill] to be just right: → *Henry is doing a good job in our organization; he really fills the bill.* 3. [to fill the gap] to meet a need; to make complete: → *We'll have to find someone to fill the gap while Steve is in the hospital.*

filthy rich – very rich: → *I am very nice to my aunt, who is filthy rich.*

fingertips – [at one's fingertips] easily available: → *Edward is an excellent instructor with good examples always at his fingertips.*

to finish off – to complete; to defeat; to kill or destroy: → *There's a little bit of ice cream left. Why don't you finish it off?*

first – 1. [first and foremost] before anything else: → *First and foremost, let's welcome our guests with a round of applause.* 2. [first come, first serve(d)] a phrase meaning, "The first ones to show up will be the first ones to receive something.": → *They won't be giving the immunizations to us in any kind of order. It'll be first come, first serve.* 3. [first-hand] direct from the original source: → *He got the information about the raise first-hand from the boss.* 4. [first-rate/first-class] top quality: → *Steve has a first-rate unit now with well-trained employees.*

fish – 1. [a big fish in a small pond] someone important in a small place or position: → *The mayor's brother was a big fish in a small pond.* 2. [like a fish out of water] helpless; out of one's familiar surroundings: → *I feel like a fish out of water at these meetings with the colonel.* 3. [to fish or cut bait] to take action or get out of the way: → *You have to make your final choice today. It's time to fish or cut bait.* 4. [fishy] strange and suspicious: → *I wouldn't trust him if I were you; his story sounds too fishy.* 5. [lots/plenty of other fish in the sea] many others: → *Even though Dan retired, there are lots of other fish in the sea, so we'll find another good instructor.*

the five-finger discount – to shoplift; to steal merchandise from a store: → *I think he got that new belt through the five-finger discount.*

fit – 1. [fit as a fiddle] in excellent physical condition: → *His father is eighty years old but still fit as a fiddle.* 2. [fit for a king] excellent; superior; the best: → *The meal was excellent; it was fit for a king.* 3. [to fit like a glove] to fit perfectly: → *The new uniform fits Anna like a glove.* 4. [fit to a "T"] just right; to perfection: → *I love the way she cooked the roast beef; it was fit to a "T."* 5. [fit to be tied] angry: → *He was fit to be tied when he found out that the supplies hadn't arrived on time.* 6. [to have a fit/to throw a fit] to show anger: → *When I tried to turn off the cartoons, my son threw a fit.*

flagpole – [to run it up the flagpole (and see who salutes)] to try out; to test: → *I think that's a good idea, but let's run it up the flagpole first and see who salutes.*

flak – 1. (a) the bursting shells from antiaircraft guns: → *The enemy's heavy flak started at 0100.* (b) negative talk about someone/something: → *The troops gave the cooks a lot of flak about the dinner.* 2. [a flak jacket] a jacket that has metal plates for protection against flak: → *The flak jacket saved the police officer's life.*

a **flap** – a confused situation; a crisis (decisive event): → *There was such a flap about the new regulation that Colonel Brown had to brief his staff.*

to **flare up** – to express a sudden burst of anger or violence: → *The captain flared up when he found out that his plans weren't approved.*

a **flash in the pan** – one who starts out well but doesn't continue; a brief success: → *I like that new singer. I hope she's not just a flash in the pan.*

flesh – [in the flesh] in person: → *I can't believe we got to see such a famous actor in the flesh.*

fly – 1. [a flyboy] an aircraft pilot, usually a member of the air force: → *The officer yelled at the new flyboy in the squadron.* 2. [a flyby] a low altitude flight by one or more airplanes over a crowd or building/s: → *Capt Rios was in trouble for his flyby over the colonel's office.* 3. [fly-by-night] disappearing before paying bills: → *There were so many fly-by-night companies that the city council had to pass stricter regulations.* 4. [to fly by the seat of one's pants] to work by feelings and without instruments: → *When we lost contact with the tower, we flew by the seat of our pants.* 5. [to fly in the face of] to ignore; to go against; to show disrespect: → *You can't fly in the face of the rules and expect the boss to be happy with you.* 6. [to fly off the handle] to become very angry very quickly: → *Marco flies off the handle when we talk about salaries.* 7. [a fly on the wall] one who will be able to listen or see without being noticed: → *I'd love to be a fly on the wall when Lena asks Charlie about all of his bills.* 8. [to go fly a kite] to go away and leave someone alone: → *All he did was ask her out on a date, but she told him to go fly a kite.*

a **flying start** – an enthusiastic beginning; good progress at the beginning: → *We got off to a flying start in our campaign to clean up the neighborhood.*

follow – 1. [to follow one's nose] to go straight ahead; to do what is appropriate or obvious: → *You can't go wrong; just follow your nose.* 2. [to follow-up] to find out more about something: → *You need to follow up on that report on that story. What happened next?* 3. [to follow suit] to follow the example of another: → *Every time I ask for a day off, John follows suit.*

food for thought – a lot to think about: → *The captain's report on the battle gave us a lot of food for thought.*

foot – 1. [to foot the bill] to pay the entire amount even for other people: → *Mr. Moore said that he would foot the bill if Jack wanted to attend college.* 2. [to get off on the wrong foot] to start negatively; to make a mistake at the beginning: → *We're good friends now, but when we first met, we got off on the wrong foot.* 3. [to get one's foot in the door] to get a lower job in the beginning in hopes of advancing: → *The mailroom job won't be much at first, but at least it'll let you get your foot in the door.* 4. [to have one foot in the grave] an exaggerated observation that someone is old and feeble, therefore almost dead: → *Mr. Carter looks like he already has one foot in the grave.* 5. [to put one's best foot forward] to make a favorable impression: → *You could put your best foot forward by wearing your dark blue suit to the interview.* 6. [to put one's foot down] to object strongly; to take firm action: → *Annette's father put his foot down when she asked for another loan.* 7. [to put one's foot in one's mouth] to say something embarrassingly stupid: → *I really put my foot in my mouth by asking the boss's wife if she was his mother.*

to **force one's hand** – to make one tell his/her plans: → *The new report may force Anna's hand and then we'll know the truth.*

forest – [to not see the forest for the trees] to not understand the whole because of preoccupation with small details: → *Henry can't see the forest for the trees since he always focuses on the unimportant issues.*

forever – [forever and ever] always: → *Love sometimes lasts forever and ever.*

to **fork over** – to pay or give: → *You need to fork over twenty bucks for the lost library book.*

forty winks – a short nap: → *Bill was tired after the trip, so he decided to catch forty winks before unloading the car.*

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foul – 1. [foul mouth] a user of profanity: → *Robert is such a **foul mouth** that I don't want him around my kids.* 2. [to foul up] to ruin or spoil: → *The breakdown in transportation **fouled up** our plans to arrive at daybreak.*

frame – 1. [a frame of mind] a state or condition of the mind: → *He was not in a positive **frame of mind** when I last talked to him.* 2. [a frame-up] a false accusation against an innocent person: → *Vicki was the victim of a **frame-up** when Jack placed the missing report in her desk.*

free – 1. [a freebie] something given or gotten free: → *I went to college with the chef, so our meal was a **freebie**.* 2. [a free-for-all] a fight in which everyone participates or takes part: → *Last night, the disagreement between the coach and the referee ended in a **free-for-all** that sent ten people to the hospital.* 3. [a freeloader] someone who always asks others for free food, money, etc.: → *John is a **freeloader**. He once stayed with us for months and never helped pay for anything.* 4. [a free ride] enjoying something without expense or effort: → *Jack will have to start working a little harder. I'm not giving him a **free ride** any longer.*

fresh – [fresh out of something] totally without something: → *Since we're **fresh out of** milk, I'll go to the store and get some.*

friendlies – friendly troops; allies; on the same side: → *Don't shoot! They look like **friendlies**.*

frog – [to have a frog in one's throat] to be hoarse; to have trouble speaking: → *When I stood up to speak, I **had this terrible frog in my throat**, so they brought me a glass of water.*

a front runner – a leader in an election, contest, etc.: → *Albert is the **front runner** in the city elections.*

a fuddy-duddy – a boring, critical, or old-fashioned person: → *Trudy can be such a **fuddy-duddy** at times. She never wants to do anything.*

full – 1. [a full bird] an O6 colonel in the air force, army, marines: → *The **full bird** is arriving at 1300 today, so get all the troops ready for inspection.* 2. [full blast] at full capacity: → *Our machines are finally running **full blast** again after we replaced some broken parts.* 3. [to be full of beans] to be

incorrect; to be spouting nonsense: → *That supply sergeant doesn't know what she's talking about with the parts; she's **full of beans**.* 4. [to be full of hot air] to use exaggerated talk or words that are emotional rather than intellectual: → *Alexander is so **full of hot air**. I don't even listen to him now.* 5. [full steam ahead] progress in a quick and complete way: → *They didn't wait but went **full steam ahead** with their plans.*

FYI – abbreviation for For Your Information: → *The boss wrote **FYI** across the top of the memo, so I didn't think I had to do anything except read it.*

Student Notes

G

Gangway! – Clear the way!: → *The workers yelled, "**Gangway!**" as they moved the heavy equipment down the hallway.*

gear – 1. [in high gear] at full activity; at top speed: → *The factories are always **in high gear** before the end of the year.* 2. [to be geared to/toward] to be prepared for a certain situation in order to get good results: → *Our students are **geared toward** passing their training.*

get – 1. [to get a bang/kick out of] to enjoy or be thrilled by something: → *His father gets a bang out of watching the smaller children play.* 2. [to get after someone] to reprimand: → *His parents got after him when he lost his house keys.* 3. [to get ahead of] to do better than; to progress more rapidly than others: → *He got ahead of the rest of the class because he studied hard.* 4. [to get along] (a) to make progress or advance: → *How are you getting along in your new job?* (b) to agree with; to be friendly: → *Dave gets along well with the workers at the factory.* 5. [to get along in years] to age; to become old: → *Although my aunt is getting along in years, she still exercises every day.* 6. [to get along without] to live without: → *When my car is in the shop, I have a hard time getting along without it.* 8. [to get away with something] to not get caught and punished after doing something illegal or bad: → *A lot of people believe that he got away with murder.* 9. [to get behind] to be late; to do something too slowly: → *I got behind in my work when I was sick.* 10. [to get by] to succeed or manage: → *I didn't do well on the examination, but I think I got by.* 11. [to get going] to start or begin: → *We need to get going if we are supposed to leave at 1500.* 12. [to get it] to receive punishment: → *He'll get it when his parents find out that he lost his jacket.* 13. [to get it all together] to arrange one's life properly: → *Peter finally got it all together and got a good job.* 14. [to get on one's nerves] to annoy: → *Jamie's children get on my nerves when they play their rock music.* 15. [to get out of hand] to be without any control: → *You've got to be very careful and not let this situation get out of hand.* 16. [to get over something] to recover from something: → *Daniel never got over losing his best friend in that accident.* 17. [to get something across] to explain; to make clear: → *He was a good speaker and was able to get his message across quite easily.* 18. [to get something over with] to complete or finish something: → *She didn't like what she was doing, so she tried to get it over with.* 19. [to get the better of] to gain an advantage over: → *Joe always gets the better of Jack in their chess games.* 20. [to get together with] to meet; to confer with: → *Get together with Brett and finish this report.* 21. [to get under way] to get started; to begin: → *It was eleven o'clock before the picnic got under way.*

the get-go – [from the get-go] from the very beginning: → *You knew from the get-go that this would be a difficult job.*

a get-up – an outfit of clothing: → *Did you see that fancy get-up he was wearing at the party?*

a GI Party – a large cleaning activity by soldiers: → *Our squad had a GI party in the barracks last night.*

a gift of/for gab – the ability to speak easily: → *Most politicians who succeed have a real gift of gab.*

give – 1. [to give a hand] (a) to give enthusiastic applause: → *After Jerry's talk, the students gave him a big hand.* (b) to help: → *Martha's moving into her new apartment this weekend, so I'll give her a hand with the furniture.* 2. [to give a break] to give one a chance: → *The police officer didn't give the man a ticket; he gave him a break instead.* 3. [to give one's right arm] to give something of great value: → *During the ten-mile walk, I would have given my right arm for a cold drink of water.* 4. [to give someone a hard time] to argue with or criticize someone: → *Our boss gave Tony a hard time yesterday.* 5. [to give the green light] to give approval to continue something: → *The boss gave us the green light to proceed.*

go – 1. [to go after something] to try to get something: → *Ivan will find out what job is available and go after it.* 2. [to go against the grain] to try to fight the system; to annoy: → *Sgt Black doesn't want to use the standard procedures; he always goes against the grain.* 3. [a go ahead] the permission or signal to continue: → *The captain gave us the go ahead to start at 1200.* 4. [to go all out] to make the maximum or greatest effort: → *Susan's friends went all out in planning her birthday party.* 5. [to go along with] (a) to cooperate; to have no objections: → *The colonel is willing to go along with the new plan.* (b) to agree; to follow: → *I go along with your idea to hire another assistant.* 6. [to go bad] to spoil: → *Some of the meat went bad, so we had to throw it away.* 7. [a go-between] a mediator: → *James will act as a go-between in the problem between the units.* 8. [a go-getter] one who always tries to progress in his/her work; an effective person: → *Lloyd sold twenty computers last month; he's a real go-getter.* 9. [to go for broke] to make the ultimate effort at something: → *We need to go for broke or we'll lose the game.* 10. [to go for it] to accept a challenge: → *Marco decided to go for it and apply for the scholarship.* 11. [to go in one ear and out the other] to not listen to; to not pay attention: → *Everything you tell him seems to go in one ear and out the other.* 12. [to go off] (a) to be fired; to explode: → *While we were hunting, we heard a gun go off across our neighbor's field.* (b) to depart or leave: → *Tony doesn't want us to go off without him.* 13. [to go out]

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(a) to die out; to stop working: → *The battery in my cell phone has **gone out** completely.* (b) to go to social affairs: → *Last Saturday, we **went out** to dinner at that expensive restaurant with friends.* 14. [to go through] to complete; to continue to the finish: → *We **went through** five years of college on a full scholarship.* 15. [to go to hell in a hand basket] to become bad; to be ruined: → *This restaurant has **gone to hell in a hand basket**; the food was cold and the service was bad.* 16. [to go up against] to meet; to challenge: → *Tomorrow night, our team will **go up against** the district champs.* 17. [to go with the flow] to agree to the way things are: → *There's no need to get upset; just relax and **go with the flow**.* 18. [to have a go at something] to try or attempt something: → *It's going to be difficult to put this report together, but I'd like to **have a go** at it.*

a **goldbrick** – a lazy person: → *I don't want that **goldbrick** in my organization. He never does any work.* (also a **goldbricker**)

a **golden parachute** – a very generous retirement package: → *Mr. Smith didn't want to step down as CEO until he made sure he had a spectacular **golden parachute**.*

a **goner** – a person or thing that is dead or ruined: → *I really thought Joe was a **goner** when he fell off the roof.*

good – 1. [for good] forever; permanently: → *When he lost his wallet, he thought it was **gone for good**.* 2. [to have it good] to enjoy health, money, pleasures, etc.: → *Joe **had it good** in Hawaii until he was transferred.*

goods – [to deliver the goods] to do impressively what one is expected to do: → *I didn't have much faith in her, but once she got onstage, she really **delivered the goods**.*

goof – 1. [to goof off] to waste time: → *He will **goof off** if you don't watch him all the time.* 2. [to goof up] to ruin; to spoil: → *That soldier can **goof** things **up** faster than anyone I've known.*

a **goose egg** – (a) a swelling caused by a bump on the head: → *When did you get that **goose egg** on your forehead?* (b) a zero; a score of zero: → *Alex got upset after the professor gave him a **goose egg** on his last report.*

Gotcha! – an exclamation meaning “I’ve caught you at something!”: → *The father yelled, “**Gotcha!**”*

at his son, who was getting more cookies in the kitchen.

grab – 1. [How does that grab you?] What do you think about that?: → *That new employee, Sharon, is going to be our boss. **How does that grab you?*** 2. [to grab a bite] to get something to eat: → *Would you like to **grab a bite** with me at the new restaurant downtown?*

grabs – [up for grabs] available, especially newly available: → *Some new chairs came in to the supply room. They're **up for grabs**.*

grapevine – [to hear something through the grapevine] to get rumors through unofficial channels: → *I heard it through the **grapevine** that Joe is going to get reassigned.*

the **graveyard shift** – work at night, usually from midnight to eight in the morning: → *Benjamin isn't happy now that he's working the **graveyard shift**.*

a **gray area** – a part of a subject that you can't tell right from wrong or yes from no; a nebulous dilemma with which you don't know how to deal: → *Until we get the latest ruling from our legal department, this matter of copyright of the new computer program remains a **gray area**. (also a **gray issue**)*

grease – [to grease someone's palm] to bribe; to buy help: → *Our tour guide **greased the right palms** and got us all through Customs in two minutes.*

to **greenlight** – to give the go ahead to do something: → *I'm sure the boss will **greenlight** your project, so start doing the preliminary work.*

a **green thumb** – the ability to make things grow: → *My uncle has a **green thumb** and can grow anything in his garden.*

ground – 1. [the ground floor] the beginning: → *I'm going to buy some stock in that new company and get in on **the ground floor**.* 2. [a ground rule] a normal procedure; a fixed rule: → *We have certain **ground rules** around here that everyone must follow.* 3. [to be grounded] to not be permitted to fly or drive; to have one's privileges suspended by a parent: → *Lt Smith was **grounded** because of an inner ear infection.* 4. [the groundwork] basic detail work; the basis of an undertaking: → *We've already completed the necessary **groundwork** for the new project.* 5.

handwriting – [to see/read the handwriting on the wall] to realize that something terrible is inevitable:
 → *After months of low sales, the owner of the company finally saw the handwriting on the wall and filed for bankruptcy.*

hang – 1. [to hang around] to stay close by; to wait:
 → *The doctor told me to hang around until she looks at my chart.* 2. [to hang fire] to be postponed or delayed: → *The meeting with the staff has been hanging fire for two weeks.* 3. [to hang in the balance] to have two possible results of equal importance: → *Tina became very sick, and her life hung in the balance for a week.* 4. [to hang loose] to keep calm: → *Hang loose! Don't fire until I give the command.* 5. [to hang on] to continue to resist; to persist: → *We can hang on for about six more hours.* 6. [to hang onto] to keep: → *Hang onto your travel orders. You'll need to make more copies when we get back.* 7. [to hang out] to spend time with: → *His mother doesn't want him to hang out with the wrong crowd.* 8. [to hang together] to remain together; to support each other: → *The boys always hung together when one of them was in trouble.* 9. [a hang-up] a problem or mental block; a frustration: → *Pierre has a hang-up with the new computer passwords; he can never remember them.*

a happy camper – someone who doesn't complain even when things might not be going well:
 → *Even though we lost the game, we were all a bunch of happy campers.*

hard – 1. [a hard act to follow] an excellent performance; difficult to beat in quality: → *Our departing boss will be a hard act to follow.* 2. [a hard and fast rule] something that doesn't change; inflexible: → *The teacher said that there was a hard and fast rule against carrying any type of weapon into the school.* 3. [as hard as nails] extremely tough and strong: → *The new drill sergeant is as hard as nails.* 4. [hard-boiled] tough; without pity: → *The first sergeant was a hard-boiled old guy from Alabama.* 5. [to be hard on] to be strict or critical of another: → *My neighbor is very hard on her children.* 6. [to be hard up] to be short of money or other necessities: → *With children and a wife who's too ill to work, he's really hard up.* 7. [to give someone a hard time] to make trouble or difficulty for someone: → *The bus driver said all the kids gave him a hard time again this morning.*

a hatchet man – a person whose job is to do necessary but unpleasant things: → *He's the hatchet man for the entire company. He does all the firing.*

have – 1. [the haves and have-nots] rich people and poor people: → *Why don't the haves help the have-nots?* 2. [to have it out with someone] to discuss something openly and directly: → *Benjamin had it out with his supervisor over a negative evaluation.* 3. [to have what it takes] to have the ability to do something: → *She's an excellent worker and has what it takes to be a manager.*

head – 1. [the head] naval term for the toilet or latrine: → *Seaman Jones was ordered to clean the head again.* 2. [to be head and shoulders above] to be above the level of others; to be superior to: → *Lucia is head and shoulders above the rest of the class.* 3. [the head honcho] the boss; the top person: → *Who is the head honcho in this unit?* 4. [a headhunter] a person or agency that looks for new employees: → *The headhunter found Anita a job yesterday.* 5. [Heads up!] Pay attention!: → *Heads up! The truck is moving!* 6. [a heads-up] an advance notice that something important will happen: → *I just wanted to give you a heads-up that some government inspectors might drop in tomorrow.* 7. [heads will roll] people will be punished, dismissed, etc.: → *When the commander gets back, heads will roll over the inspection results.* 8. [in over one's head] in a situation one is not able to manage: → *I think Tom is in over his head with this new project.* 9. [to go over someone's head] (a) to go to an authority higher than your immediate supervisor or commanding officer: → *If you are not happy with Al's decision, you can go over his head.* (b) difficult to understand: → *The instructor's explanation of the grammar was over my head.* 10. [to put heads together] to consult; to discuss together: → *They put their heads together and came up with a plan.*

heart – 1. [after one's own heart] liking someone because of similar interests: → *With his love for reading, he is a man after my own heart.* 2. [by heart] from memory: → *The child knew the whole poem by heart.* 3. [to have a heart of gold] to be very kind and generous: → *Gloria has a heart of gold; she never refuses to help anyone in need.* 4. [heart on one's sleeve] showing one's emotions openly: → *He's always got his heart on his sleeve.* 5. [a heart-to-heart talk] a very personal and direct talk with someone: → *I'll have a heart-to-heart talk with him tonight about his engagement.* 6. [to one's heart's

content] as much as one likes: → *Joanna played the piano to her heart's content.*

helter-skelter – in an unorganized way: → *His desk was a mess with all his papers scattered helter-skelter.*

herring – [a red herring] a false clue intended to deceive someone: → *The movie had at least five red herrings, all of which I fell for.*

hide – 1. [to hide one's head in the sand] to deliberately avoid seeing, recognizing, or understanding reality: → *You can't hide your head in the sand about all your unpaid bills.* 2. [to save one's hide] to help someone out of a difficult situation: → *He has saved my hide on more than one occasion.* 3. [to tan someone's hide] to give someone a severe spanking: → *I told those kids I would tan their hides if they pulled up any more of my flowers.*

high – 1. [high and dry] isolated; abandoned; having no source of supply or replacements: → *Our office was left high and dry when three managers quit.* 2. [high and low] everywhere: → *We searched high and low for the book but didn't find it.* 3. [a high brow] an intellectual person who is a snob: → *Ann is a highbrow who won't talk with anyone she considers lower-class.* 4. [in high places] in important positions: → *Do you know anyone in high places who might help you?* 5. [a high sign] a signal to go ahead or proceed; a signal meaning anything prearranged: → *Give me the high sign when you see them depart.* 6. [the higher-ups] the people who have important positions: → *The higher-ups approved the suggested changes.* 7. [to high five] [to congratulate by slapping palms high in the air]: → *I wish we'd taken pictures of Granny high fiving Shaq after the Lakers game.* 8. [to hightail it] to move away quickly; to leave quickly: → *Let's hightail it out of here before anyone calls the cops.*

hill – [over the hill] too old to do what one used to do: → *Jack shouted that he's not over the hill yet.*

hit – 1. [to hit below the belt] to attack unfairly: → *His remark really hit below the belt and made her angry.* 2. [to hit it off] to get along well: → *I was afraid the new boss would be tough to work for, but we hit it off right away.* 3. [to hit it on the nose] to do something exactly or correctly: → *Hal hit it on the nose when he said, "We need teamwork."* 4. [to hit pay dirt] to do something that makes a lot of money: → *He bought some old paintings and hit pay dirt*

when he sold them at auction. 5. [to hit the books] to study: → *I have to hit the books tonight since I have a test tomorrow.* 6. [to hit the bull's-eye] to be correct; to get a desired result: → *When Mary stated that we needed better communication, she hit the bull's-eye.* 7. [to hit the deck] to fall to the ground; to seek cover or shelter: → *We hit the deck when the bombers came over.* 8. [to hit the ground running] to be well-prepared before starting: → *Since everyone is already familiar with this computer program, we can hit the ground running with our next report.* 9. [to hit the hay/sack] to go to bed: → *I'm tired. I need to hit the hay early tonight.* 10. [to hit the jackpot] to be very lucky or successful: → *You hit the jackpot when you got Mrs. Gonzalez for a teacher. She's the best.* 11. [to hit the nail on the head] to do or say the correct thing; to describe perfectly: → *Paul's solution to the problem really hit the nail on the head.* 12. [to hit the road] to leave; to go: → *We've got everything packed and are ready to hit the road.* 13. [to hit the roof/ceiling] to get very angry: → *When the major learned about the stolen truck, he hit the roof.* 14. [to hit town] to arrive: → *What time is he expected to hit town?*

hog wild – extremely excited; acting without control: → *The men went hog wild when they won the soccer game.*

hold – 1. [Hold it!] Stop!; Wait!: → *Hold it! Let's hear what the platoon leader has to say.* 2. [to hold one's horses] to be calm or patient: → *Hold your horses! Continue working until we are dismissed.* 3. [to hold one's own] to lose no ground; to keep one's position: → *She can hold her own in any argument with the managers.* 4. [to hold one's tongue] to not talk: → *Hold your tongue! I don't want to hear any more about it.* 5. [to hold someone to something] to expect one to do something that was promised: → *Christopher's family held him to his promise to visit every Friday evening.* 6. [to hold something against someone] to have a negative opinion about someone because of something said or done: → *Daniel still holds it against me that I got the promotion and he didn't.* 7. [to hold (down) the fort] to stay and watch out for things: → *I'm going to be gone for two days, but I know you'll be able to hold down the fort.* 8. [to hold the line] to keep the current position or situation; to stay on the phone: → *Wally's Store is holding the line on its prices and not raising them.* 9. [to hold up or keep up one's end] to do one's part of the work: → *You can depend on Fred to hold up his end and finish this project by*

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Friday. 10. [to hold water] to prove true: → *Allen's stories don't **hold water**, so don't believe him.*

a hole – [in the hole] in debt: → *I had to stop playing poker when I realized I was two hundred bucks **in the hole**.*

hook – 1. [by hook or by crook] by any available way: → *He says he'll get the report finished **by hook or by crook**.* 2. [hook, line, and sinker] believing something completely: → *The boss believed Hank's crazy story **hook, line, and sinker**.* 3. [off the hook] out of trouble; out from under a difficult responsibility: → *George is finally **off the hook**. The commander transferred the project to Alexander yesterday.* 4. [to hook up with] to join or meet someone: → *I need to **hook up with** the commander today for an important meeting.*

hopping mad – very angry: → *That guy down the street was **hopping mad** when some kids threw paint on his new car.*

horn – 1. [on the horns of a dilemma] faced with two choices, either of which is equally bad: → *I'm on the **horns of a dilemma**. I don't know if I should accept the lower position or quit.* 2. [to blow one's own horn] to brag or boast about one's own accomplishments: → *I don't want to **blow my own horn**, but I got 100 on the math test.*

horse – 1. [to horse around] to be engaged in rough fun; to not be serious: → *They kept **horsing around** and didn't finish the project.* 2. [a horse of a different color] something completely separate and different: → *Nearly everyone likes chocolate ice cream, but to eat a gallon at a time is a **horse of a different color**.* 3. [horse play] rough play: → *I decided there had been enough **horseplay** and sent the kids to bed.* 4. [horse sense] direct, practical common sense: → *You can trust that new captain. She's got a lot of **horse sense**.* 5. [on one's high horse] acting as though one is better than others: → *Erica makes me angry when she gets on her **high horse** and talks about moral superiority.* 6. [a one-horse town] a small and insignificant town: → *Alexandra is very unhappy about her family moving to that **one-horse town**.*

hot – 1. [a hot dog] one who is very good at a job, sometimes without caution: → *That new pilot is a **hot dog**, so you'll need to monitor him carefully.* 2. [a hot line] an emergency telephone number or line: → *Something very important's happening. The colonel is on the **hot line** with the Pentagon.* 3. [hot

off the press] latest news: → *Listen! This is **hot off the press**; we are going to report for temporary duty in Hawaii next month.* 4. [a hot shot] a very gifted and successful person: → *John is the **hot shot** in supply, so ask him when the supplies will arrive from the other base.* 5. [hot under the collar] very angry: → *James got **hot under the collar** when he heard that his sister had driven his car into a ditch.* 6. [in hot water] in trouble: → *My little brother was always **in hot water** when we were growing up.* 7. [not so hot] not very good: → *I thought the movie was **not so hot**, so why is everyone else praising it?*

house – [on the house] free, without cost: → *The bartender announced that our drinks were **on the house**.*

how – [how come/how so] why: → *We have to work all day Sunday, but I don't know **how come**.*

huff – [in a huff] angry: → *Don't get **in a huff**; he didn't mean what he said.*

hump – [over the hump] past the main or difficult part; near the end of something: → *When we pass the next small town, we'll be **over the hump**.*

Student Notes

I

ice – 1. [on ice] in reserve; held for later use: → *Let's hold this box of books **on ice** just in case more people show up later.* 2. [to be/skate on thin ice] in a precarious situation: → *Be careful what you say today. You're already **on thin ice**.*

the information highway – the Internet and all the data it can rapidly provide: → *Thanks to the **information highway**, students in rural areas can access web sites all over the world.*

inside – 1. [an inside job] an illegal action done with the help of someone within the organization: → *The new computers were stolen from the personnel office, and everyone knows that it was an **inside job**.* 2. [inside out] completely reversed: → *That's not what I said. They took my story and turned it **inside out**.* 3. [on the inside] in a position of influence or confidence: → *I have a friend who's **on the inside** at that bank, and he's told me things you wouldn't believe.*

iron – 1. [to have too many irons in the fire] to be working on too many different activities simultaneously: → *I can't coach the softball team this year. I already **have too many irons in the fire**.* 2. [to iron out] to discuss and reach an agreement about something; to find a solution: → *We can **iron out** these problems tomorrow morning.*

an ivory tower – [in an ivory tower] to be far removed from reality; to not understand the workings of the real world: → *You've been **in your ivory tower** so long that you don't know how the working class lives.*

Student Notes

J-K

a jack of all trades – a person capable of doing many things, none of them really well: → *Dan is a **real jack of all trades**. He says he can fix anything.*

a jam – [in a jam] in a difficult situation: → *Harry is **in a terrible jam** if he can't finish the report in two hours.*

jerry-built – built in a cheap and poor way: → *Those new **jerry-built** homes will be in need of expensive repairs soon.*

a jet jockey – a jet aircraft pilot: → *Tony is a **jet jockey** in the air force.*

a jiffy – [in a jiffy] in a short space of time: → *I'll be there **in a jiffy**.*

to jog one's memory – to help one remember: → *Grandpa has forgotten a lot, but sometimes an old song will **jog his memory** about his youth.*

a joy ride – a ride taken only for fun: → *The young men took the sports car out for a **joy ride**.*

jump – 1. [to jump all over someone] to severely criticize; to find fault with someone: → *My boss always **jumps all over me** whenever I make a mistake.* 2. [to jump down someone's throat] to suddenly become very angry; to criticize severely: → *Don't **jump down my throat**; it wasn't my fault the team lost.* 3. [to jump on the bandwagon] to join a group or a cause that appears to be gaining in success or popularity: → *It wasn't until the boss expressed his opinion that Dan **jumped on the bandwagon**.* 4. [to jump ship] to defect from a group, sometimes ideologically: → *Two more professors have **jumped***

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ship and signed the protest letter. 5. [to jump-start] to start something that doesn't want to start (from using jumper cables to start a car with a dead battery): → *We need to **jump-start** this project. It's been inactive for months.* 6. [to jump the gun] to begin before the starting time: → *We **jumped the gun** and left an hour earlier.* 7. [to jump to conclusions] to make a fast decision before the information is complete: → *Anita mistakenly **jumped to the conclusion** that Henry had been fired.* 8. [one jump up on] ahead by very little: → *Jesse's team is **one jump up on** us, but we'll catch up to them.*

(the) jury's still out – a decision hasn't been made yet: → *According to the colonel, **the jury's still out** on how many troops will be going to Germany next month.*

keep – 1. [to keep an eye on someone/something] to check something regularly: → *Remember that we have to leave at 1200, so **keep an eye on** the time* 2. [to keep an eye out for] to watch for: → *Please **keep an eye out for** John. I need to talk with him before he leaves today.* 3. [to keep at arm's length] to keep at a distance or away from someone: → *Since Mark insulted Marie at a meeting, she **keeps him at arm's length**.* 4. [to keep/stay in touch with someone] to remain familiar with someone by writing, calling, e-mailing, etc., on a regular basis: → *I haven't seen Frank for two or three years, but we **keep in touch with each other** by e-mail.* 5. [to keep one's chin up] to remain brave and confident in a difficult situation; to not worry much: → *I know that things have been difficult for you recently, but **keep your chin up**.* 6. [to keep one's feet on the ground] to have sensible ideas: → ***Keeping your feet on the ground** is not an easy thing to do when you're a rich and famous athlete.* 7. [to keep one's fingers crossed] to hope for the best: → *I'm **keeping my fingers crossed** that I passed the test.* 8. [to keep one's nose clean] to avoid doing wrong; to stay out of trouble: → *You need to **keep your nose clean** this week and not get in trouble with the police again.* 9. [to keep one's nose to the grindstone] to work hard, without breaks: → *If I **keep my nose to the grindstone**, I should finish this today.*

keeps – [for keeps] forever; not just a short loan: → *My brother gave me his old bike **for keeps**.*

kick – 1. [to kick back] to relax: → *I want to **kick back** tonight and watch TV for a few hours.* 2. [to kick in] to take effect; to start working: → *The doctor said these pills would take about an hour to **kick in**.* 3 [to kick something around] to discuss; to

think about something: → *We need to **kick the idea around** at the meeting this afternoon.* 4. [to kick up a fuss] to complain loudly; to make a problem: → *The new officer **kicked up a fuss** about his substandard housing.* 5. [to kick up one's heels] to have a good time; to party: → *Let's celebrate by **kicking up our heels** at a club or two tonight.*

a killing – [to make a killing] to gain a large amount of money: → *They **made a killing** when they sold their car at such a high price.*

kitchen – [the (whole) kitchen sink] everything: → *That stew recipe called for everything except **the kitchen sink**, but it turned out good.*

a klutz – a clumsy person: → *Sherry is such a **klutz**. She breaks everything she touches.*

to knock it off – to stop saying or doing something: → *The angry mother told her loud children to **knock it off**.*

a knockout – a very attractive person or thing: → *Jan's daughter is a **knockout**. She could be a model.*

knot – [to tie the knot] to get married: → *I hear you're going to **tie the knot** next month. Congratulations.*

know – 1. [for all one knows] a phrase meaning that one doesn't know anything about the topic: → *I have no idea when the meeting is. **For all I know**, it's been canceled.* 2. [I know.] "Yes, I agree.": → *Person A: This memo is hard to understand. Person B: **I know**. I've tried reading it twice.* 3. [in the know] well-informed: → *The colonel is the only person **in the know** around here.* 4. [know-how] knowledge or ability to do something: → *Oscar has the **know-how** to be a good team leader.* 5. [a know-it-all] someone who acts as if he or she knows everything: → *Tim is such a **know-it-all** that no one in the class likes him.* 6. [to know better] to be too smart or experienced to have done something wrong or stupid: → *Why did you speed through a school zone? You **know better** than that.* 7. [to know one's own mind] to know what one wants to do, sometimes used in the negative: → *She's not going to transfer to the office in New York. She **doesn't even know her own mind** yet.* 8. [to know one's way around] to know how things operate; to understand complicated matters; to be familiar with a place: → *She **knows her way around** this company. She's worked here for twenty years.* 9. [to know which side one's bread is buttered (on)]

to know how to act for one's benefit when given two choices: → *He's not going to criticize the boss's proposal. He knows which side his bread is buttered on.* 10. [What do you know?] an expression of surprise indicating that some news is unexpected: → *Well, what do you know? The paper says that team finally won a game.* 11. [you never know] an expression meaning something might be possible: → *I'm sure they'll lose their next game, but you never know.*

to knuckle under – to yield to pressure; to give in: → *Keep yelling at him and he'll knuckle under in no time.*

Student Notes

L

to be laid up – to be confined as a result of illness or injury: → *Al broke his back in a skiing accident, so he's going to be laid up for several months.*

(on the) lam – running and hiding from the police: → *The escaped convicts have been on the lam for five days now.*

land-office business – a lot of business: → *That restaurant has done land-office business since they opened up for breakfast.*

large – 1. [a large order] a difficult task: → *It will be a large order for Carla to finish the project by next month.* 2. [at large] free after an escape: → *The man who robbed the bank remained at large for weeks.* 3. [in large part] mostly; mainly: *Your job, in large part, will consist of greeting people and directing them to the right area.*

last – 1. [last ditch] final; strongest: → *In a last ditch effort to save their home, Carlos asked his father-in-law for the money.* 2. [the last straw] the final act that one can tolerate: → *My roommate used my toothbrush on his dog's teeth. That's the last straw!*

late – 1. [a late bloomer] a young person who doesn't achieve very much until he/she is older: → *Although Terry made poor grades in high school, she was a late bloomer and got straight A's in college.* 2. [the late shift] the late hours of work (maybe 4 p.m. to midnight): → *Anna's working the late shift tonight, so she's not very happy.*

laugh – 1. [to laugh up one's sleeve] to be secretly amused: → *I had to laugh up my sleeve when Dick said the boss favored him over Rose.* 2. [a laughing matter] a funny or silly situation: → *We could all see that the injury Dan received was no laughing matter.*

lay – 1. [to lay a bomb] to fail; to finish unsuccessfully: → *Benjamin knew he had laid a bomb when the colonel sent him out of the meeting.* 2. [to lay a trap] to prepare a trap: → *Before leaving the position, Lt. Wood ordered the unit to lay a trap for the enemy.* 3. [to lay down one's arms] to surrender: → *The unit laid down its arms in the face of the enemy fire.* 4. [to lay down the law] to establish and enforce regulations and discipline: → *The first day the colonel was here, he laid down the law and said he wouldn't tolerate less than outstanding.* 5. [to lay eyes on] to see; to view: → *The first time George laid eyes on that car, he wanted it.* 6. [to lay it in his/her lap] to give him/her the problem: → *If Robert can handle it, then why not lay it in his lap?* 7. [to lay it on thick] to give excessive praise/flattery: → *I know Ross deserved praise, but the boss really laid it on thick at the ceremony.* 8. [to lay it out on the table] to explain clearly and completely: → *Since we don't understand his plan, we'll have to ask the major to lay it out on the table.* 9. [to lay one's cards on the table] to explain all the details; to make one's intentions clear: → *Fred laid his cards on the table so we knew exactly what he planned to do.* 10. [to lay one's hands on] to get: → *The officer asked me if I*

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was going to be able to **lay my hands on** the map we need. 11. [to lay stress on] to emphasize: → The captain **laid stress on** the necessity of target practice.

a lazybones – a person disliking physical or mental exertion: → Bryan is a **lazybones**, so don't bother to ask him to go jogging.

lead – 1. [to lead a dog's life] to have an unhappy or hard life: → He's **leading a dog's life** here at work with Mr. Craft as his boss. 2. [a lead foot] a tendency to drive fast: → Sam's **lead foot** is going to get him another speeding ticket. 3. [to lead one by the nose] to manage; to control completely: → Joseph's wife wouldn't dream of trying to **lead him by the nose**. 4. [to lead someone down the garden path] to misguide with false information: → She started to follow his advice but realized he'd been **leading her down the garden path**. 5. [to lead someone on] to encourage someone to believe something untrue or mistaken: → She assumed that he was serious when he offered her the job, but he was just **leading her on**.

league – 1. [in league with] joined with someone for a common goal, usually for negative purposes: → They accused him of being **in league with** the oil companies to raise prices. 2. [the big league(s)] a big or professional organization: → You're in the **big league** now, so don't think you can wear those old disco clothes to work here.

to **leak** – to secretly give information in an unauthorized way: → We still don't know who **leaked** the news to the media.

leap – [by leaps and bounds] very rapidly: → The group project moved ahead **by leaps and bounds**.

to **leapfrog** – to advance by skipping or bypassing a stage or two: → We might be able to **leapfrog** that class from Book 7 to Book 9.

learn – 1. [to learn a/one's lesson] to gain experience from making a mistake: → I **learned** my lesson. I'll never speed through that neighborhood again. 2. [to learn by heart] to memorize: → The children had to **learn** their parts in the play **by heart**. 3. [to learn the hard way] to learn by making a mistake: → Jack **learned the hard way** that you can't cheat on a test. The school expelled him.

leave – 1. [to leave a bad taste in one's mouth] to give a bad impression: → His attempt to cheat me **left a bad taste in my mouth**. 2. [to leave

it/something alone] to not touch or deal with something: → You can **leave** that pile of papers **alone**. I'll sort them tomorrow. 3. [to leave loose ends] to not finish the job completely: → I want the job finished completely, so don't **leave any loose ends**. 4. [to leave someone holding the bag] to leave someone in an awkward position or with the responsibility that others have abandoned: → Mario was supposed to help Olga with the project, but he refused and **left her holding the bag**. 5. [to leave someone in the lurch] to abandon someone in trouble: → Just when Alicia needed his help the most, Philip went home and **left her in the lurch**. 6. [to leave no stone unturned] to make a complete investigation or search: → The policemen have **left no stone unturned** in their search for the missing weapon. 7. [to leave someone high and dry] to abandon: → Mary **left Tony high and dry** in California without any money. 8. [to leave word] to leave a message: → Edward **left word** with his secretary for me to call him.

left – 1. [out in left field] wrong: → He was really **out in left field** when he told us that we could leave at 1200. 2. [to have two left feet] to be very clumsy or awkward: He won't dance with you. He knows he has **two left feet**.

leg – 1. [on one's last legs] about to fall from old age or exhaustion: → I feel like I'm **on my last legs** right now. 2. [to not have a leg to stand on] to not have a good excuse or reason: → It won't do you any good to say you didn't know about the meeting. We all got the same e-mail about it. You **don't have a leg to stand on**. 3. [to have/get a leg up] to have an advantage over someone: → Jane has a **leg up** on Andrea due to her computer skills. 4. [to stretch one's legs] to allow someone who has been sitting to stand up and take a break: → We need to **stretch our legs** for a few minutes. Take a break.

a lemon – anything defective or unsatisfactory: → My first car was a real **lemon**. It was always in the shop.

lend – 1. [to lend a hand] to aid; to help: → I'll **lend** you a **hand** when you move. 2. [to lend an ear] to listen to someone: → If you'll **lend an ear**, I'll tell you some of my problems.

let – 1. [to let bygones be bygones] to forget past differences: → We finally decided to **let bygones be bygones** and be friends again. 2. [to let go] to release: → He **let go** of the rope and fell to the

ground. 3. [Let her rip!] Allow the action/process to start!: → *All of the systems are in place, so **let her rip!*** 4. [to let one's hair down] to behave informally: → *You need to **let your hair down** on the weekends.* 5. [to let oneself go] (a) to do what one wants to do: → *Why don't you just **let yourself go** and enjoy your vacation time?* (b) to become careless about one's appearance → *After he retired, he **let himself go** and never shaved or got a haircut.* 6. [to let sleeping dogs lie] to not cause or make trouble if you don't have to: → *I'd **let sleeping dogs lie** and not tell mother if I were you.* 7. [to let someone down] to be a disappointment or failure to someone: → *He promised to help me, but at the last minute he **let me down.*** 8. [to let someone off the hook] to permit someone to go; to release from a duty, punishment, or promise: → *The officer **let Jessica off the hook** when she told him the story.* 9. [to let someone in on] to share a secret with: → *If I **let you in on** something we are planning, will you promise not to repeat it?* 10. [to let someone/ something rain on one's parade] to spoil someone's special occasion or fun: → *You should go ahead with your plans, and don't **let Wayne rain on your parade.*** 11. [to let something slide] to give something little attention; to neglect: → *He won't **let his lessons slide** because he wants A's in his courses.* 12. [to let well enough alone] to not interfere, so as not to make something even worse than it is: → *You should **let well enough alone** and not talk about his mistake.*

letter – 1. [the letter of the law] each detail of the law: → *We're going to follow the **letter of the law** on this one and not change anything.* 2. [letter-perfect] something that has no mistakes: → *Your presentation was **letter-perfect.***

letup – relief: → *The work keeps piling up and there seems to be no **letup** in sight.*

level – 1. [a level playing field/to level the playing field] a situation where opportunities are equal/to give everyone an equal chance to achieve: → *I'm not asking for favoritism. I just want a **level playing field.*** 2. [to level with] to tell the truth; to reveal something: → *Danny needs to **level with** Amelia and tell her the whole story.*

a lick and a promise – a careless job done very quickly: → *I'll give the house a **lick and a promise**, and then we can go shopping at the mall.*

lid – [to put a lid on] to say no more: → *Those two kids have been arguing for hours. Tell them to **put a lid on it.***

lie – 1. [to lie low] to remain out of sight: → *Jan says she'll **lie low** today. She doesn't want any extra work.* 2. [to lie through one's teeth] to make a completely untrue statement: → *He was **lying through his teeth** to us all along, so we'll never trust him again.*

life – [for the life of someone] an expression meaning no matter how hard you try, you can't find an answer or solution (used for emphasis with negative statements): → *I can't **for the life of me** remember that person's name.*

to lighten up – to not be so serious: → *I wish George would **lighten up** once in a while; he's too serious.*

limb – [out on a limb] in a risky or uncertain position: → *The officer didn't have to do it, but he went **out on a limb** to help us.*

the limelight – [in the limelight] the center of attention: → *Our newest employee loves being **in the limelight** and is always talking loudly.*

listen – 1. [to listen out for something] to be alert for information; to pay attention: → ***Listen out for** that song on the radio today and tell me who sings it.* 2. [to listen to reason] to accept advice; to be reasonable: → *The boss won't **listen to reason** from anyone except Ned.* 3. [listen up] pay attention: → *I have some important announcements, so **listen up.***

little – 1. [little by little] gradually; slowly: → *His progress seemed poor at first, but **little by little** his English improved.* 2. [little does one know] one hardly expects: → ***Little did** we know that she was planning to quit.*

live – 1. [to live and let live] to let others live as they want and not bother them: → *Although I don't agree with his choices, we need to **live and let live.*** 2. [to live from hand to mouth] to have enough money to pay for only basic needs: → *Alice and Richard are **living from hand to mouth** since he lost his job.* 3. [to live off the land] to use local resources: → *An important part of your survival training will be to learn how to **live off the land.***

to be loaded – to be rich: → *Tom is **loaded.** His family is in oil.*

lock – 1. [to lock and load] to get ready; referring to preparing to immediately fire your weapon: → *The sergeant told them to **lock and load** and prepare to*

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fight. 2. [to lock horns] to argue; to engage in a fight (discussion): → *I locked horns with Phelps over proper procedures*. 3. [lock, stock, and barrel] completely, everything: → *When my father got sick, he sold the whole shop lock, stock, and barrel*. 4. [under lock and key] well protected, secured, and locked up: → *I keep all my files under lock and key*.

a log – [as easy as falling off a log] easy to accomplish or solve: → *Jerry said that using this new system will be as easy as falling off a log*.

loggerheads – [at loggerheads] in a dispute or disagreement: → *Raymond and Alexandra are always at loggerheads about how to do the monthly reports*.

long – 1. [in the long run] in the final result; in the end: → *You may not be happy now, but in the long run you'll be glad you stayed in college*. 2. [a long shot] a very small possibility or chance: → *The idea is a long shot, but we should try it*. 3. [a long way to go] still needing improvement: → *John still has a long way to go before he's completely well*.

look – 1. [to look a gift horse in the mouth] to find fault with something that's free: → *Don't look a gift horse in the mouth; just accept the present and say "Thanks."* 2. [to look after] to take care of: → *I have to look after the office this afternoon while the secretary is out*. 3. [to look alive] to hurry; to move more rapidly: → *Look alive! The train is leaving in a few minutes*. 4. [to look before you leap] to use caution before advancing: → *I know you think you should get married, but you need to look before you leap*. 5. [to look down one's nose at] to think of as worthless: → *She looked down her nose at the cheap car*. 6. [to look for a needle in a haystack] to search for a small object in a large area: → *Trying to find that report on this unorganized desk is like looking for a needle in a haystack*. 7. [to look forward to something] to anticipate with pleasure: → *She is really looking forward to her retirement*. 8. [to look into one's crystal ball] to make a guess: → *I wish I could look into my crystal ball and see who will win the championship next month*. 9. [to look out upon] to have the view of something in a specified direction: → *Both of us have apartments which look out upon the ocean*. 10. [to look sharp] to look good: → *The cadets all look sharp in their new uniforms*. 11. [to look the other way] to ignore or pretend not to notice something that is wrong or illegal: → *You weren't supposed to use our copier for your personal work, but we'll look the other way this time*.

a loony bin – a madhouse; a lunatic asylum: → *If I don't get to take a long vacation soon, I'm going to end up in the loony bin*.

the loop – 1. [to be in the loop] to be involved in a decision-making process: → *Why don't you attend our next meeting? You need to be in the loop on this one*. 2. [to be out of the loop] to be excluded from a decision-making process: → *Don't blame me for any of that mess. I was totally out of the loop as far as that project's concerned*.

a loose cannon – a careless person who could harm a group or damage a project: → *Bill was taken off the project. He's a loose cannon*.

a loose tongue – carelessly talking about private information: → *Jeff has a loose tongue, so be careful what you say around him*.

lose – 1. [to lose face] to lose dignity; to experience some disgrace or embarrassment: → *Neither nation in the dispute wished to lose face*. 2. [to lose one's cool] to get overly excited; to become angry: → *Ed always loses his cool at meetings when we discuss salaries*. 3. [to lose one's grip] to lose one's control; to show signs of weakening: → *James is losing his grip with the old employees, so they're always rude to him now*. 4. [to lose one's head] to become excited; to lose one's normal self-control: → *Greg lost his head for a moment when he screamed at the private*. 5. [to lose one's mind] to become crazy: → *John lost his mind after the accident*. 6. [to lose one's shirt] to lose all one's money: → *Ivan lost his shirt playing blackjack in Las Vegas*. 7. [to lose one's temper] to get very angry: → *He lost his temper when they told him he had to work overtime*. 8. [to lose one's touch] to lose one's skill or abilities: → *Looking at this gorgeous bookcase, I'd say that the carpenter has certainly not lost his touch*. 9. [to lose one's way] to become lost; to go wrong: → *I know the way to their house so well that it would be impossible for me to lose my way*. 10. [to lose track of someone or something] to lose all contact with; to fail to maintain current information about: → *After the family moved to Europe, we lost track of them*. 11. [a lost cause] something which has no chance of succeeding: → *Exercise is a lost cause for me. I can't ever get to the gym*. 12. [to be lost in thought] to be inattentive: → *Jerry must have been lost in thought since he didn't remember a thing I said to him*.

a loser – a very unpleasant, obnoxious person; someone who is incompetent: → *Carla's boyfriend*

was a real **loser**, so we were happy when they broke up.

a **loss** – [at a loss] (a) at a financial loss: → We finally had to sell the house **at a loss**. (b) being uncertain: → Robert was completely **at a loss** to explain why he hadn't finished the report. (c) not knowing what to say: → Judith was **at a loss** for words at her surprise birthday party, and all she could say was "Thanks."

a **loudmouth** – a foolish, noisy person: → Tim is such a **loudmouth** that I don't want to be around him.

lousy – someone/something that's very bad: → Mark is a **lousy** soccer player, so don't ask him to join our team.

low – [a low blow] an unfair and mean comment or occurrence: → That was a **low blow** when the boss said all of our recent problems were Tom's fault.

lower – [to lower the boom] to inflict serious punishment: → The new colonel **lowered the boom** on the lieutenants who missed Commander's Call.

luck – [as luck would have it] fortunately or unfortunately: → As **luck would have it**, we were able to get on an earlier flight.

a **lucky dog** – a very fortunate person: → Sam is a **lucky dog**. He found \$100 on the ground in front of this building.

lump – 1. [to have a lump in one's throat] to be choked up from emotion: → Whenever I talk about the ending of that movie, I get a **lump in my throat**. 2. [to lump together] to put different people/things together and consider them as a single group: → This information would be easier to read if it were in sections instead of being all **lumped together** like this. 3. [to take one's lumps] to receive punishment without defending oneself: → Dave didn't say a word at the meeting. He just sat there and **took his lumps**.

lunch – 1. [a free lunch] the act of getting something without doing anything for it: → Why would they send us all this new furniture? There's no such thing as a **free lunch**. 2. [to be out to lunch] to not pay attention; to be totally preoccupied: → They asked me dozens of questions, but I was so **out to lunch** I couldn't even remember my own name.

Student Notes

M

made – [to have it made] to have an easy time of something: → Once I finish this project, I'll **have it made** and can relax for awhile.

made-to-order – perfect; just right; just what you want: → The weather was **made-to-order** for our picnic.

maiden – 1. [a maiden name] a woman's family name before marriage: → I think her **maiden name** was Lopez. 2. [a maiden voyage] the first trip made by a ship: → The Titanic sank during her **maiden voyage**.

make – 1. [make-or-break] crucial as far as success or failure: → The next few weeks will be **make-or-break** for that company. 2. [to make do] to manage to get along with whatever is available: → The power might stay off for hours. Can you **make do** with candles and flashlights until then? 3. [to make good] to succeed: → Everyone assumed he would be a failure, but he **made good**. 4. [to make it] (a) to be able to be somewhere at a certain time: → I told Joe that I can **make it** to the meeting this afternoon. (b) to succeed: → When she left for Hollywood, I somehow knew she was going to **make it**. 5. [to make something of oneself] to become successful: → I doubt if he'll ever be able to **make anything of himself**. 6. [to make tracks] to hurry: → We need to **make tracks** if we want to get home before midnight.

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makeshift – temporary substitute; improvised: → *They turned the school cafeteria into a makeshift hospital.*

man – 1. [a man/woman of letters] an author, a writer: → *She gave up her career as a lawyer to become a woman of letters.* 2. [a man/woman of the world] well informed; worldly: → *He is a man of the world thanks to his frequent travels.* 3. [a man-hour] work of one person for one hour: → *This new system should save us a lot of money and many man-hours.* 4. [to manhandle] to handle roughly: → *The suspects said the police manhandled them.*

map – [all over the map] everywhere; trying to cover too many different topics simultaneously: → *I didn't get much out of the meeting because we were all over the map most of the time.*

mark – 1. [to mark time] to allow time to pass without making progress; to wait: → *He's just marking time here until he finds a better job in New York.* 2. [to mark one's words] to pay close attention to what one says; an expression indicating prophecy: → *Mark my words, he will never be elected.* 3. [to mark one as something] to characterize: → *His comments have already marked him as a trouble-maker as far as the boss is concerned.*

math – [to do the math] to examine the facts and come to the only possible (and obvious) conclusion: → *Whom do you think she'll marry? Joe is handsome, rich, talented, intelligent. You do the math!*

a matter of life and death – something of vital importance: → *The officer said that getting the supplies was a matter of life and death.*

mean – 1. [to mean business] to be serious: → *I meant business when I said that I need the report by 1200.* 2. [to mean to say] to intend to say: → *I meant to say hello to her, but I forgot.* 3. [to mean well] to have good intentions: → *Harry means well, but he can't get things right the first time.*

means – 1. [by all means] certainly: → *By all means, let us hear from you after everything is finished.* 2. [by no means] certainly not: → *You can borrow my car, but by no means can you drive it out of town.* 3. [a means to an end] an action leading to some end or purpose: → *Terry's training was a means to an end since he's preparing himself for a promotion.*

meat – 1. [dead meat] in deep trouble: → *If you don't do your homework tonight, you'll be dead meat.* (also **dog/dawg meat**) 2. [the meat of the matter/question] an important, critical point: → *We will get into the meat of the matter at the end of the meeting.* (also **heart of the matter**)

meet – 1. [to meet halfway] to compromise: → *I'll agree to your first two demands if you meet me halfway and accept our price.* 2. [to meet head-on] without trying to avoid someone/something: → *Rudolph refused to meet the difficult matter head-on and kept avoiding the main issue.* 3. [to meet one's Waterloo] to encounter a decisive or disastrous defeat or reverse: → *Bruce met his Waterloo when he went to the meeting unprepared.*

mend – 1. [to mend one's fences] to repair the weaknesses and smooth over the problems that have developed with someone: → *Their youngest son returned home to mend his fences with his brothers and sisters.* 2. [to mend one's ways] to change for the better: → *Judy used to be irresponsible, but now she has mended her ways.*

a method to one's madness – having some idea or plan in mind which is not as crazy as it first appears: → *We realized the doctor had a method to his madness when he cured the patient overnight.*

the Midas touch – the ability to make, manage, and keep huge amounts of money: → *George has the Midas touch. He's always inventing things that earn him a lot of money.*

a/to midnight requisition – (noun and verb) to "borrow" something from another office or unit when no one is around to stop you; a way to obtain what you need without going through proper channels: → *It would've taken us months to get some new chairs for the Day Room, so we got these through midnight requisition from Bravo Company.*

might as well – a good idea to do something, although not of major importance: → *If you're going to the commissary, I might as well go with you and get a few things I need.*

milk – [to cry over spilled milk] to complain or cry about something that has already happened (usually used in negative advice): → *You made a costly mistake, but you can't do anything about it now. Don't cry over spilled milk.*

mind – 1. [a mind like a sieve] forgetful: → *I have a mind like a sieve today. I can't even remember where I put my car keys.* 2. [to give someone a piece of one's mind] to say exactly what one thinks; to chew someone out; to tell someone off: → *I think it's time you gave him a piece of your mind.* 3. [to mind one's p's and q's] to take care in speech and action: → *You'd better mind your p's and q's around him because he loves to report people to the boss for not working seriously.* 4. [in one's right mind] sane: → *The way he talks makes me wonder if he's in his right mind.* 5. [of the same mind] in agreement: → *I agree with you that the report is weak; we're of the same mind.* 6. [out of one's mind] unable to think clearly; crazy: → *He's out of his mind if he thinks I'll give him the money.*

miss – 1. [to miss something by a mile] to be completely wrong: → *The student thought he had answered the teacher's question correctly, but he missed it by a mile.* 2. [to miss the boat] to delay something until too late; to do the wrong thing and lose the chance: → *There was a bake sale this morning, but you missed the boat.* 3. [to miss the bus] to fail because of slowness; to delay doing something until it is too late; to lose the chance to do something by doing it wrong: → *Tony missed the bus by not going to college when his parents offered to pay for it.*

mixed – 1. [a mixed bag] an assortment of objects, issues, etc.: → *The speech was a mixed bag of quotations, large numbers, and opinion.* 2. [mixed up] bewildered; confused: → *We got mixed up on our directions and drove miles out of our way.*

a Monday morning quarterback – someone who is good at telling people what they should have done after it's too late; someone who likes to point out errors from the past that are now obvious to everyone: → *John's a great Monday morning quarterback; he always has good advice two weeks after the fact.*

money – 1. [for my money] in my opinion: → *For my money, her latest CD is her best one yet.* 2. [hush money] money paid to keep something a secret: → *It turns out he had been paying hush money to a blackmailer for years.* 3. [Money is no object.] an expression meaning that no matter how expensive it is, the person will pay for it: → *I want new chairs in the living room, and money is no object.* 4. [Money talks.] Money influences people.: → *Money talks with many politicians.* 5. [money to burn] more money than is needed: → *My uncle is so rich that he*

has money to burn. 6. [a run for one's money] a close race; a contest causing thrill and excitement: → *Although Sally won first place, Alan gave her a run for her money.* 7. [to be made of money] to be very rich: → *The way he spends, you'd think he's made of money.* 8. [to get one's money's worth] to obtain good value in relation to the money spent: → *They have a great buffet at that restaurant. You really get your money's worth.* 9. [to put one's money where one's mouth is] to follow through with a stated plan: → *I know you favor Plan B, but are you willing to put your money where your mouth is?* 10. [to throw good money after bad] to continue to spend money in a losing effort: → *I don't know why they keep making repairs on that old house. They're only throwing good money after bad.*

monkey – 1. [to monkey around] to spend time playing or joking instead of being serious or working; to waste time: → *Stop monkeying around and finish that paper!* 2. [monkey business] any activity that is dishonest, illegal, or objectionable: → *There is a lot of monkey business going on in the city government.* 3. [a monkey on one's back] a responsibility for someone/something: → *Jay tried to give the project to Sonya, but she didn't want that monkey on her back.*

a month of Sundays – a very long time: → *Where have you been? I haven't seen you for a month of Sundays.*

to **mooch** – to continually borrow or beg: → *He always mooches my paper and pens.*

moon – [once in a blue moon] rarely: → *They live so far away that we see them only once in a blue moon.*

to **moonlight** – to have a second job usually at night: → *Some of our cops are now moonlighting as security guards at various nightclubs.*

to **mop up** – to destroy the last areas of resistance: → *Your unit will mop up that part of the city.*

more – 1. [more and more] increasingly: → *I find more and more that I enjoy reading Proust.* 2. [more or less] about; approximately: → *It will cost you a hundred dollars, more or less.* 3. [more than one bargained for] more than expected: → *I am so tired. That long walk was more than I bargained for.*

a mountain – 1. [a mountain of (paper) work] a lot of work piled up: → *There was a mountain of paper work on my desk when I got back from my*

being something else; the central issue: → *The name of the game is to be very, very nice to the boss during the next meeting.* 3. [one's good name] one's reputation: → *The senator's good name was restored after he won the lawsuit.*

narrow – 1. [a narrow escape] an escape which almost did not occur: → *George had a narrow escape when the train nearly hit him last night.* 2. [a narrow squeak/squeeze] something that is just barely successful: → *I made it in on time, but it was a narrow squeeze.*

nasty business – an unpleasant job, situation, operation, etc.: → *Trying to resolve the lawsuit out of court was nasty business.*

near – 1. [near at hand] only a short distance or time away: → *When Martha broke her leg in the forest, fortunately, there was a doctor near at hand.* 2. [one's nearest and dearest] one's relatives and friends: → *All of her nearest and dearest showed up for her graduation.* 3. [nowhere near/not anywhere near] far away: → *You took a wrong turn. We're nowhere near that restaurant.* 4. [to the nearest...] a phrase used when rounding off numbers: → *Just give me a rough estimate to the nearest thousand.*

neck – 1. [neck and neck] side by side; even, equally distant: → *We don't know who's going to get the promotion. It's still neck and neck between Joe and Mary.* 2. [neck of the woods] a particular area or place: → *I've never been to this neck of the woods before.* 3. [to stick one's neck out] to take a risk: → *I'm not going to stick my neck out and criticize the proposal.* 4. [up to one's neck] very busy or occupied by something: → *I'm up to my neck in paperwork right now. I'll call you back later.*

needle – 1. [like looking for a needle in a haystack] searching for something that will be impossible to find: → *I know his name is Jose and I know he lives in Mexico City, but it'll be like looking for a needle in a haystack.* 2. [to needle] to annoy; to disturb; to criticize; to bother with many questions/comments: → *Greta's little brother is constantly needling her.*

neither here nor there – not important to what is being discussed: → *What you say about the situation is neither here nor there since I've already made my decision.*

never – 1. [never had it so good] situations have never been better than they are right now: → *I don't know what he's complaining about. He never had it*

so good at his other job in California. 2. [never mind] forget about something; don't worry about it: → *Never mind baking a cake. Jerry already bought one.* 3. [never say die] never give up: → *You can take that hill. Never say die.* 4. [never say never] don't think something is impossible because it might happen: → *Never say never. Things might be different tomorrow.*

the nick – [in the nick of time] just in time to prevent a problem or disaster: → *Peter slammed on the brakes in the nick of time and avoided the horse in the middle of the road.*

to nip in the bud – to stop at an early stage: → *The plan to overthrow the government was nipped in the bud before anything developed.*

to nit-pick – to bother with minor questions; to give objections based on insignificant details: → *We don't have time to nit-pick because we have to finish this report by 1600.*

no – 1. [no account] worthless; a person of low social station: → *Elizabeth doesn't know anything about this situation, so her opinion is of no account to me.* 2. [a no brainer] something requiring very little thought: → *They asked me if I wanted to go TDY to Hawaii for a week. Talk about a no brainer.* 3. [no dice] a way to say "No.": → *Henry asked if he could borrow some money, but John said, "No dice!"* 4. [a no go] something that is canceled; unsuccessful: → *Due to the rain, the company picnic is a no go for this afternoon.* 5. [no great shakes] not very good: → *Tom is no great shakes when it comes to volleyball.* 6. [no joy] radio procedure term used to indicate no contact with the enemy: → *The pilot made no contact with the enemy, so he transmitted, "No joy."* 7. [no love lost] a feeling of not liking: → *Those clerks have argued so long that there's no love lost between them.* 8. [no matter] regardless: → *We need to leave tomorrow early in the morning no matter what the weather's like.* 9. [no point in/to] no purpose; no reason: → *There is no point in talking to the colonel. She's already made her final decision.* 10. [no strings attached] freely with no limitations: → *There are no strings attached, so proceed with the plan.* 11. [no sweat] no difficulty/ problem: → *It's no sweat if you need help with your report. I can help you this afternoon.* 12. [no wonder] naturally; not surprising: → *It's no wonder Alexandra sings so well. She practices for hours everyday.*

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a noncom – a noncommissioned officer: → *That new noncom in our organization is a very hard worker.* (also NCO)

nose – 1. [to have a nose for] to have a talent for something: → *Give the report to Bill; he has a nose for finding mistakes.* 2. [to have one's nose out of joint] to be annoyed or offended: → *Did anyone say anything to hurt Andrew's feelings? He has his nose out of joint today.* 3. [nosy] impolite; curious about other people's secrets: → *He's nosy. He always wants to know everyone else's business.* 4. [to put one's nose to the grindstone] to work very hard: → *They put their noses to the grindstone and completed the project before their deadline.* 5. [under one's nose] right in front of: → *Somebody stole his car right from under his nose while he was in the cafe.*

not – 1. [not all there] not mentally alert; insane: → *Sometimes I think Ed's not all there. He does and says the strangest things.* 2. [not have enough sense to come in out of the rain] lacking the intelligence to react to an obvious situation: → *Have you noticed that Erin's kid doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain?* 3. [to not know which end is up] to be completely confused or stupid: → *Stephen didn't know which end was up when they transferred the new accounts to him.* 4. [to not let any grass grow under one's feet] to not wait too long to do something: → *When Alexandra gets an assignment, she doesn't let any grass grow under her feet before completing it.* 5. [to not lift a finger] to not help in any way: → *Greg said he wouldn't lift a finger to help her.* 6. [not so hot] not good: → *This report is not so hot, so we need to work on it some more.* 7. [not to mention] besides, in addition to: → *They own a home on the coast in California, not to mention an apartment in New York.*

note – [compare notes] to exchange ideas and opinions: → *Let's get together and compare notes before we talk to the police.*

nothing – 1. [for nothing] (a) for free: → *I got this tuxedo for nothing when my brother joined the army.* (b) with no result: → *My project got canceled, so all the work I did was for nothing.* 2. [nothing but] only; just: → *He drinks nothing but mineral water.* 3. [nothing doing] a phrase meaning absolute refusal: → *They wanted me to work overtime Sunday morning, but nothing doing!* 4. [nothing less than] a minimum amount or standard: → *I want nothing less than \$11,000 for that car.* 5. [nothing like] without equal: → *There's nothing like a cold glass of*

lemonade after working for hours in the garden.

6. [nothing much] almost zero: → *I did nothing much during my vacation.* 7. [nothing to write home about] nothing special in any way: → *Her new house is nothing to write home about. It looks like all the others in the area.* 8. [sweet nothings] typical romantic words that lovers whisper to each other: → *They spent the entire movie whispering sweet nothings in each other's ears.* 9. [to come to nothing] to end without any success: → *The two sides negotiated for three days, but it all came to nothing.* 10. [to have or want nothing to do with someone/something] to want to avoid something completely: → *I will have nothing to do with my ex-husband's family.* 11. [to have nothing on someone] to be unable to compete with someone who is better: → *You might think you're a good dancer, but you've got nothing on Tom.*

now – 1. [now and then] not often; occasionally: → *Now and then, I like to drive up into the mountains.* 2. [every now and again] sometimes; occasionally: → *Every now and again, I like to eat raw potatoes.*

to nuke – to heat in a microwave: → *You will need to nuke the cold pizza for a few minutes before you eat it.*

number – 1. [number one] the best; the top person; the person in command: → *When it comes to organizing office parties, Marie is number one.* 2. [one's number is up] something bad is about to happen to a person: → *When four policemen started pounding on his door, Tom knew his number was finally up.* 3. [to do a number on someone or something] to harm, abuse, or deceive someone: → *Sitting for five hours on the hard floor did a number on my back.* 4. [to have/get someone's number] to find out someone's true character: → *He can pretend to be whatever he wants to pretend, but I've got his number now.*

a nutshell – [in a nutshell] in a few words: → *In a nutshell, the reason I'm quitting my job is that I've joined the army.*

Student Notes

O

o-dark-thirty – before dawn: → *If we want a good fishing place, we'll have to leave the house at o-dark-thirty.*

odds – 1. [odds and ends] small unimportant things: → *The builders have a few odds and ends to finish on the house.* 2. [to be at odds with] to be in disagreement: → *This manual is at odds with what the repairman said about the monthly maintenance.*

off – 1. [off and on] not often; occasionally: → *We don't exercise regularly, just off and on.* 2. [on the off-chance] because of a small chance that something might happen: → *The players stood around and waited on the off-chance that the rain might stop.* 3. [to be better off] to be in a better situation: → *You'll be better off if you don't take so much luggage.*

offhand – speaking generally; not officially: → *Offhand, I think we need more computers, but it's not for me to say.*

OJT – abbreviation for On-the-Job Training: → *Mark has never used a computer, so he'll need a lot of OJT.*

old – 1. [the good old days] an earlier time when things were better: → *Remember the good old days when gasoline was 29 cents a gallon?* 2. [an old flame] a former sweetheart: → *I ran into an old flame of mine last night at the party.* 3. [Old Glory]

the flag of the United States of America: → *It always thrills me to see Old Glory flying in the wind.* 4. [an old hand] an experienced person: → *Phil is an old hand at repairing car engines.* 5. [the Old Man] the commanding officer: → *We're having a party for the Old Man next week.* 6. [the old school] an older, more conservative way of doing things: → *He's from the old school, so he believes in the teacher lecturing all day and the students never speaking in class.* 7. [an old-timer] someone who has been in the organization many years: → *For some reason, not a one of our old-timers wants to retire yet.* 8. [the same old story] an excuse that has been heard too many times: → *He keeps giving me the same old story about how the check must have gotten lost in the mail.* 9. [to be old enough to know better] to be mature enough not to have done something wrong or stupid: → *I can't believe he got another speeding ticket. He's old enough to know better.*

on – 1. [and so on (and so on and so on)] like the preceding; et cetera: → *We had cake, ice cream, music, balloons, lemonade, games, and so on and so on and so on.* 2. [on and off] intermittently: → *The weatherman says it'll rain on and off all weekend.* 3. [on and on] continuously: → *The lecturer went on and on for hours. I finally had to leave.* 4. [to be on to something or someone] to be aware or have information about: → *I think they're on to a solution to our printing problem.*

once – 1. [all at once] suddenly and unexpectedly: → *I was waiting for the bus when all at once I heard thunder.* 2. [at once] immediately: → *Come here at once!* 3. [just for once] one time only: → *Just for once, I'd like to sit down to dinner without having the phone ring.* 4. [once and for all] finally; for the last time: → *I'm telling you once and for all to stop using my toothbrush.* 5. [once in a while] occasionally: → *They go to the movies once in a while, but not very often.* 6. [once or twice] one or two times: → *I guess I have been late for work once or twice in my career.* 7. [once too often] one time too many: → *I guess he shouted at her once too often. That's why she asked for a transfer.* 8. [once upon a time] the traditional opening words at the beginning of a fairy tale; the phrase to indicate something happened a long time ago: → *Once upon a time, back when things were more genteel, we wore suits and ties to work.* 9. [to give something a once-over] to look briefly: → *Give this memo a once-over and tell me what you think.*

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open – 1. [open-and-shut] sure; certain; positive; very obvious: → *The police say this is an **open-and-shut** case. Apparently, the culprits have confessed.* 2. [an open book] something which is easily seen and understood; without any secrecy or hidden meanings: → *My life is an **open book**. I've never kept secrets from anyone.* 3. [an open invitation] a permanent invitation to visit with no specified dates given: → *Drop by any time you want to. You know you have an **open invitation** to our place.* 4. [an open mind] a willingness to hear new ideas: → *Let's keep an **open mind** about this and not judge it too early.* 5. [to keep one's options open] to delay making a decision: → *Don't accept the transfer yet. **Keep your options open** in case something better presents itself.* 6. [to open up] to talk about a problem: → *I think you'd feel better if you **opened up** and told me what's wrong.*

order – 1. [in short order] quickly: → *When the fire alarm started, we evacuated the building **in short order**.* 2. [out of order] (a) broken; not working properly: → *That machine is **out of order**, so don't try to use it.* (b) not following established rules at meetings or in court: → *The chairman declared me **out of order** and wouldn't let me finish speaking.*

out – 1. [on the outs] disagreeing; no longer friendly: → *The two brothers have been **on the outs** for years now.* 2. [out-and-out] complete or thorough: → *Our team's great performance earned us an **out-and-out** victory last night.*

outfit – unit; organization: → *The colonel said that our **outfit** is the best one on base.*

over – 1. [all over again] one more time from the beginning: → *Because the camera wasn't videotaping, she had to start her speech **all over again**.* 2. [over and over] repeatedly; many times: → *He has said the same thing **over and over** for two hours.*

an overall picture – a general view of all that is involved: → *The colonel gave us an **overall picture** of next year's possible changes.*

to overrun – to beat an enemy before he has the chance to retreat or withdraw: → *It may be very difficult to **overrun** the enemy in this terrain.*

Student Notes

P

pack – 1. [to pack a wallop/punch] to carry or have a large amount of power: → *This new weapon really **packs a wallop**.* 2. [to pack it in] to quit: → *I'm tired. Let's **pack it in** for the day.*

to paddle one's own canoe – to work without help; to earn one's own living; to support oneself: → *Chris finally left home to **paddle his own canoe** in Chicago.*

a paddy wagon – a van or truck the police use to take people to jail: → *Seventeen demonstrators were taken away in a **paddy wagon**.*

a pain in the neck – someone or something extremely disagreeable or unpleasant: → *My brother can be a **pain in the neck** when he takes my books without permission.*

paint – 1. [to paint a picture] to explain in more minute detail, usually said sarcastically: → *Anthony has explained the very simple plan three different times to you. Do you also need me to **paint a picture**?* 2. [to paint a rosy picture] to describe in an ideal/unrealistic manner: → *He **paints a rosy***

picture of the house; however, it was actually in need of major repairs. 3. [to paint a gloomy/grim/dark picture] to describe in a very pessimistic manner: → The chief economist **painted a gloomy picture** about next year's earnings. 4. [to paint the town red] to drink and have a good time; to celebrate, probably in more than one place: → My niece's graduation is this Friday, and she plans to **paint the town red** with her friends.

palm – [to have someone in the palm of one's hand] to control intellectually or emotionally: → Anita held the audience **in the palm of her hand** when she gave her speech.

to **pan out** – to turn out all right: → He had big plans to open a new business, but things didn't **pan out**.

par for the course – typical for the situation: → It's **par for the course** for new trainees to feel scared on the first day.

pass – 1. [to pass muster] to be satisfactory; to be acceptable in accordance with some standard(s): → Lately, Mike's reports are poorly written and haven't been **passing muster**. 2. [to pass the buck] to pass a problem or responsibility to another instead of taking care of it oneself: → Ivan always **passes the buck** to another manager whenever he has difficulties in the office. 3. [to pass the hat] to ask for contributions: → We are **passing the hat** to get Anna flowers for her birthday. 4. [to pass the time of day] to greet; to chat with briefly: → I've only **passed the time of day** with the colonel, but he seems like an okay guy. 5. [to pass the word] to communicate; to forward a message: → **Pass the word** to the other privates that our barracks will be inspected tomorrow. 6. [to pass the word down/up the line] to communicate through a chain of command: → **Pass the word down the line** that we will leave at 0400.

passé – (French) no longer used; old-fashioned: → Judy dresses in a fashion that's **passé**; she really needs to buy herself a new wardrobe.

pasture – [to put out to pasture] to force into retirement, like what you might do with an aging racehorse: → I hear they're going to **put Mr. Smith out to pasture** next month.

pat – 1. [a pat answer] a prepared reply; a standard response: → Our professor rejects any **pat answers** and wants us to think more deeply. 2. [to have something down pat] be very familiar with something: → She **has the mission briefing down**

pat, so let's have her give it again today. 3. [to pat someone on the back] to give praise: → Let's all give Mary a **pat on the back**. She did a great job chairing the conference.

pay – 1. [to pay attention] to observe and listen carefully: → You need to **pay attention**. Remember there's a quiz tomorrow. 2. [to pay back] to repay; to return a loan: → I have to **pay back** the money I borrowed from Clyde. 3. [to pay dearly] to pay a lot: → Joe **paid dearly** for his new computer. 4. [to pay dividends] to give benefits later: → Switching to the new printers might not show much cost saving immediately, but it will **pay dividends** by next year. 5. [to pay for itself] to earn back the cost of something and start making a profit: → The new equipment should **pay for itself** by next year. 6. [to pay lip service to] to agree with outwardly, but secretly disagree: → Although the politician **paid lip service to** tax cuts, he's really not going to change anything. 7. [to pay off] to produce good results: → College can be tough at times, but it will **pay off** after you get your diploma. 8. [to pay one's respects] to meet a social obligation by calling or visiting: → We **paid our respects** to Helene after she lost her son. 9. [to pay one's own way] to pay the expenses for oneself: → She went to dinner and the movie with us, but she **paid her own way**. 10. [to pay the piper] to suffer for one's foolish acts or behavior: → If we don't get some sleep tonight, we'll be **paying the piper** tomorrow at work. 11. [to pay the price/penalty] to receive punishment for doing something wrong: → If you shoplift, you have to **pay the penalty**, no matter what it is. 12. [to pay through the nose] to pay too much: → Tony really **paid through the nose** for his new car.

pay dirt – [to hit pay dirt] to find something good or valuable; to achieve something great: → He **hit pay dirt** when he busted the lock on that old filing cabinet and found some gold coins.

(to be) **PC** – to be Politically Correct; to be inoffensive to any group: → I'm afraid some of your attempts at humor **were not very PC**.

a **peak load** – the greatest amount of something in a given time limit: → Our **peak load** for new sales is in the summer months.

pencil – 1. [to pencil in] to mark with a pencil: → She took the typed manuscript and **penciled in** some corrections. 2. [a pencil pusher] someone who works at a desk working with paperwork, usually used in a

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negative manner: → *Since Everett changed jobs, he has become a **pencil pusher** and is very unhappy.*

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. – People shouldn't criticize when they are equally at fault.: → *I told Inez she should stop criticizing others about their tardiness. **People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.***

a pep talk – a short talk designed to create enthusiasm: → *I'm going to give my nervous son a **pep talk** about the benefits of attending college.*

pet – 1. [a pet] a favorite: → *Joe is the teacher's **pet**.* 2. [a pet name] an abbreviated or special name showing affection: → *Jake always addresses his wife with the **pet name** "Sugarpie."* 3. [a pet peeve] a subject which is a main or major source of annoyance: → *One of my **pet peeves** is the farmers who drive their old trucks slowly in the left lane.* 4. [a pet subject] a favorite topic: → *Lately, her **pet subject** is early retirement.*

pick – 1. [to pick a quarrel/fight] to start a quarrel or argument intentionally: → *Allen always **picks a quarrel** with Dana over money.* 2. [pick and shovel work] the basic detail work or the first work done on a project: → *After we finish the **pick and shovel work**, we can make good progress.* 3. [a pick-me-up] a drink or other stimulant taken to relieve weakness or fatigue: → *Jeanne needed a **pick-me-up**, so she bought a cup of coffee.* 4. [to pick out of thin air] to make a guess or estimate: → *Some of my classmates don't study. They **pick** their answers out of thin air.* 5. [to pick someone's brain] to ask another person for ideas or suggestions: → *Let me **pick** your brain for a few minutes about what gift to buy my wife.* 6. [to pick up the check/bill] to pay for everyone in the group: → *I was really shocked when my younger brother **picked up the check** for dinner.* 7. [to pick up the pieces] to recover what you can from a bad situation in order to start again: → *Dorothy **picked up the pieces** and moved on after she lost her old job.* 8. [picky] very choosy: → *Boris is very **picky** about the food that he eats, so just boil him some meat and potatoes.*

pickle – [in a pickle] in a bad or awkward situation: → *I'm really **in a pickle** because I need to be in two places at once.*

picture – 1. [the big picture] the complete plan or operation: → *You have to be in the organization a long time before you can see the **big picture**.* 2. [in

the picture] involved: → *Since you might inherit this project, you need to be **in the picture**.* 3. [out of the picture] no longer involved: → *Don't ask him to rewrite the memo. He's **out of the picture** now.* 4. [to get the picture] to understand completely: → *You are not to drive the car under any circumstances. **Get the picture?***

piddling details – minor and unimportant points: → *Thomas spends too much time worrying about **piddling details** rather than focusing on the issue.*

pie – 1. [as easy as pie] easy to do or solve: → *Getting out of the bad situation was **as easy as pie**.* 2. [pie in the sky] an unrealistic dream; an impossible promise: → *I'm tired of politicians who offer us **pie in the sky** and then raise taxes.* 3. [a piece of the pie] a portion or share of something: → *If Headquarters approves a bonus, I want my **piece of the pie**.* 4. [to have a finger in the pie] to be involved in: → *I don't believe Steve wasn't around when the decision was made. I know he **had a finger** in this **pie**.*

a piece of cake – easy; simple: → *Learning the new computer program will be a **piece of cake** since it's so similar to the last one.*

pieces – 1. [to fall/go to pieces] (a) to fall apart emotionally or nervously: *He **went to pieces** after his father died.* (b) to be in an old and bad condition (with **fall** only): → *This house is **falling to pieces**.* 2. [to pound to pieces] to cause severe damage: → *Last night's hail almost **pounded my car to pieces**.*

to pile into – to crowd quickly into a place or vehicle at one time: → *The young men **piled into** the van and left for New York.*

a pill – [a hard/tough/bitter pill to swallow] something hard to accept: → *Being defeated by one point in a championship game was a **hard pill to swallow**.*

pin – 1. [to pin down someone] to trap someone: → *We need to **pin down** the enemy at that location.* 2. [to pin someone's ears back] to beat or defeat: → *Now that you have a faster racing car, you should be able to **pin** your opponents' ears back.* 3. [to pinpoint] to identify; to locate someone or something accurately: → *We need to **pinpoint** the cause of this problem as soon as possible.* 4. [on pins and needles] nervous: → *I've been **on pins and needles** all day waiting for some phone calls.*

pinch – [in a pinch] at a critical point; in an emergency: → *Normally I wouldn't use this, but it'll do in a pinch.*

a **pink slip** – notification of being let go (laid off) from a job: → *Twenty more employees will be given the pink slip next week.*

pipe – 1. [pipe dreams] wishful, fantastic hopes or notions (from smoking an opium pipe): → *You can't go through life with these pipe dreams of yours. It's time to face reality.* 2. [a pipeline] a normal channel of supply; a regular source: → *We have several new projects waiting in the pipeline.* 3. [to put something in someone's pipe and smoke it] to think about something; usually said sarcastically: → *That's what our commander said, so you can just put that in your pipe and smoke it.*

place – 1. [all over the place] everywhere; widely separated: → *I had to drive all over the place to find the right tire.* 2. [out of place] (a) not in its proper position: → *I knew that someone had entered my home during the day because everything was all out of place.* (b) improper: → *Kenneth's personal comments about his mother-in-law were definitely out of place at that formal party.* 3. [to change places with] to be in someone else's situation or job: → *I would never want to change places with a policeman in New York City.* 4. [to fall into place] to become easily understood because of being seen in the proper relationship: → *Once all of the clues started falling into place, the detective was able to solve the murder.* 5. [to go places] to be successful: → *As early as high school, it was obvious to everyone that Mary would go places.*

plant – (a) to set or place something in the ground: → *Take your time and plant the mines as carefully as possible.* (b) to take a position; to put into position: → *Plant your right foot about two feet ahead of your left foot.* (c) a false situation or object designed to mislead the enemy; a spy having a covering identity: → *Security is investigating Tim. They think he may be a plant for a rival company.*

plastic – credit card/s: → *I don't have any cash, so I have to use plastic to pay for the meal.*

play – 1. [to play ball with someone] to cooperate with someone: → *He promised to give me some of the profits if I played ball with him on the business deal.* 2. [to play cat and mouse] to tease or fool by pretending to let someone go free and then catching

him/her again: → *The detective played cat and mouse with the suspects until he finally trapped them.* 3. [to play games] to be childish; to be playful; to not be serious: → *We have an important job to do, so don't play games.* 4. [to play hooky] to remain away from school: → *Bill's parents are upset with him. He played hooky again today.* 5. [to play into the hands of someone] to do something that another person can use advantageously: → *By being careless, he played into the hands of his opponent.* 6. [to play it by ear] to decide what to do as one goes along: → *Jean decided to play it by ear instead of following the written script.* 7. [to play it cool] to not get excited; to not do anything quickly: → *Don't get angry and fight the system; instead, play it cool.* 8. [to play it safe] to not take any unnecessary risks: → *I'm not sure how we're supposed to pay for the hotel. To play it safe, I'm going to take a lot of cash, some credit cards, and a bunch of traveler's checks.* 9. [to play one's cards right] to use abilities and opportunities in order to be successful: → *Everyone has to work next Saturday, but if you play your cards right, the boss might exempt you.* 10. [to play possum] to pretend to be dead or asleep: → *The cat was playing possum, ready to jump on the mouse.* 11. [to play second fiddle] to have a subordinate part; to follow another person: → *He doesn't seem to realize that he may have to play second fiddle to some of the supervisors.* 12. [to play the horses/ponies] to bet on horse races: → *Ivan is always playing the horses and losing his money.* 13. [to play the market] to try to make money in the stock market: → *Mr. Baker made a lot of money playing the market last year.* 14. [to play tricks on] to make someone the victim of a joke or trick: → *Frederick got very angry when the other boys played a trick on him and hid his clothes.* 15. [to play with fire] to do something dangerous: → *If Joe really is driving with a suspended license, he's playing with fire.*

to plow through – (a) to do something quickly: → *Mary plowed through the pile of papers on her desk.* (b) to try to get through something with great difficulty: → *I'm trying to plow my way through this 1000-page novel.*

a **plush job** – a nice, easy job: → *George now has a plush job as the assistant to the governor's assistant.*

pocket – [out of pocket] absent or unavailable: → *The commander will be out of pocket for two days, so you need to ask her your questions today before she leaves.*

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point – 1. [a point] a lead element in a movement or attack: → *Your squad will take **point** position in this attack.* 2. [a point of contact] someone to get in touch with for information: → *Once you check into the hotel, your **point of contact** will be Ms. Jones at the embassy.* 3. [a point of no return] a stage in a process after which you must continue forward with no chance to turn back: → *No one has signed any contracts yet, so we haven't reached the **point of no return** if you want us to back out.* 4. [a point of view] a personal opinion: → *My **point of view** is that violence on TV does not affect children.* 5. [to be beside the point] to be irrelevant: → *What you said is **beside the point**. We're discussing other matters.* 6. [to the point] relevant: → *Mary's comments have been **to the point**. Let's follow her advice.* 7. [up to a point] only to a certain extent; not completely: → *I agree with you **up to a point**, but I disagree about the final issue.*

polish – 1. [to polish off] to defeat; to finish completely: → *There's not much cake left, so why don't you **polish it off**?* 2. [spit and polish] a thorough cleaning: → *Every office needs some **spit and polish** before the next inspection.*

the pond – the Atlantic or the Pacific: → *Two of London's hit musicals will cross the **pond** to New York next season.*

a poop sheet – an information sheet; a memo with data: → *Here's the **poop sheet** with all the latest personnel changes.*

pop – 1. [to pop over] to make a quick, casual visit: → *Let's **pop over** to your Mom's house before we go to the store.* 2. [to pop the cork] to celebrate something, as if opening the champagne bottles: → *We got the contract. It's time to **pop the corks**.* 3. [to pop the question] to propose marriage: → *Edward dated Lisa only three months before he **popped the question**.* 4. [to pop up] to happen or occur, usually suddenly: → *This problem **popped up** three months ago but was never solved.*

the poster child – the best representative of something: → *After what he said at the meeting, I think he's our new **poster child** for stupidity. (also poster boy and poster girl)*

potluck – a meal for which everyone brings a food item to share, and with luck, there will be a good variety of dishes available: → *Our luncheon next Tuesday is **potluck**. Can you bring a dessert?*

pour – 1. [to pour oil on troubled waters] to pacify; to calm: → *The situation was very tense, but the boss **poured oil on troubled waters** by promising some policy changes.* 2. [to pour out the lead] to shoot a great deal of ammunition: → *Our platoon **poured out the lead** all day at the firing range.*

a power play – a very strong movement against another: → *The other side was gaining until we brought out our latest **power play** against them.*

practice – 1. [to practice what one preaches] to do what one advises others to do: → *If you think jogging is so good, why don't you **practice what you preach** and join us at the track this afternoon?* 2. [to put into practice] to use; to put into effect; to carry out: → *It is one thing to have theories, and quite another to **put them into practice**.*

to preach to the converted – to tell people things that they already believe: → *Of course we need a stronger military. You're **preaching to the converted** here. (also to preach to the choir)*

premium – [at a premium] needed very much; expensive: → *Rooms with air-conditioning are always **at a premium** in July and August.*

to be pressed for time – having very little time: → *I'm a little **pressed for time** right now, so could you please call back later?*

pretty – 1. [a pretty kettle of fish] a difficult and annoying situation; a mess: → *We got ourselves into a **pretty kettle of fish** by ordering new printers without knowing how hard it was to buy new cartridges for them.* 2. [a pretty penny] a large sum: → *Their house is beautiful; they must have paid a **pretty penny** for it.*

pros and cons – advantages and disadvantages of someone/something: → *What are the **pros and cons** of switching systems?*

psych – 1. [to psych someone out] to intimidate using psychological methods: → *We tried to **psych** the other team out by playing loud rock music between plays.* 2. [to psych up] to prepare mentally for a difficult task: → *How can I **psych** my students up for tomorrow's TOEFL?*

a public enemy – a criminal wanted by the Federal authorities: → *Ever since his first robbery, he has wanted to be the FBI's **Public Enemy #1**.*

pull – 1. [pull] influence: → *Barbara has a lot of pull with the captain.* 2. [to pull a fast one] to cheat or deceive: → *Mr. Rice pulled a fast one when he sold us that car.* 3. [to pull a few/some strings] to secretly use power and influence to get something: → *The president of the bank is my uncle, so I can pull a few strings for you.* 4. [to pull a long face] to become sad; to show one's disapproval or annoyance: → *Linda pulled a long face when she heard that we would have to work overtime.* 5. [to pull punches] to use less force than one is capable of using; usually used in the negative: → *The commander didn't pull any punches when he chewed us out for our latest readiness rating.* 6. [to pull a duty] to be assigned to perform a temporary duty, i.e., to pull guard, to pull night duty, to pull patrol, to pull CQ or KP: → *It's my turn to pull guard duty next week.* 7. [to pull off] to successfully perform a maneuver: → *The unit pulled off the sneak attack without losing a man.* 8. [to pull (a fast) one on someone] to cheat; to deceive: → *He tried to pull a fast one on me, but I caught on in time.* 9. [to pull one's leg] to fool or trick someone into believing an untrue story: → *Max was pulling my leg when he said that I would get a bonus.* 10. [to pull oneself up by the/one's own bootstraps] to succeed by one's own efforts: → *The student pulled himself up by the bootstraps and graduated early.* 11. [to pull out all the stops] to do something to the maximum: → *I thought it would be a small informal briefing, but the presenters pulled out all the stops.* 12. [to pull rank] to use one's superior position or authority on a person of lower rank in order to get a privilege or favor: → *Philip pulled rank on me, and I got his night duty.* 13. [to pull the plug] (a) to stop something: → *We need to pull the plug on the planned designs for the new building.* (b) to stop a life support system: → *The medical team never considered pulling the plug on the patient.* 14. [to pull the rug out from under someone] to do something suddenly that leaves someone else at a disadvantage: → *Joe said he would do half of our briefing, but he pulled the rug out from under me and refused to help.* 15. [to pull the wool over someone's eyes] to mislead: → *The politician tried to pull the wool over our eyes about his new tax proposal.* 16. [to pull up short] to stop quickly: → *From the way Mr. Wood was shouting, I thought he was going to fire Tom, but then he pulled up short and left the room.* 17. [to pull up stakes] to depart; to change one's residence or place of business: → *They decided to pull up stakes and move west.*

to punch through – to go through the enemy's defenses: → *Our platoon was able to punch through the temporary barricades.*

puppy love – the first love of very young people: → *When Fred and Alicia began dating in high school, their parents thought it was just puppy love.*

push – 1. [to push (a certain age)] to be approaching (a certain age): → *Even though he's pushing 70, he doesn't want to retire.* 2. [to push on] to continue; to advance: → *We need to push on in order to arrive at 0400.* 3. [to push one's luck] to take additional risk(s): → *If you're already getting Friday off, you're pushing your luck by asking for Thursday and Monday off too.* 4. [to push the panic button] to panic; to get extremely excited: → *Don't get excited and push the panic button. Read the message again calmly.*

to pussyfoot – to step carefully or gently around a serious issue, the way a cat walks: → *Did you notice how the speaker was able to pussyfoot around the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace?*

put – 1. [to put someone down] to talk badly about others: → *Ivan always puts others down, so that makes him unpopular.* 2. [to put someone in his or her place] to criticize someone for being impolite; to remind someone of his or her low rank or position: → *When Frank asked her age, the teacher had to put him in his place.* 3. [to put someone on the spot] to place someone in a difficult position: → *Gregory put Michelle on the spot when he asked her, right in front of the boss, how she planned on correcting all her grammatical errors.*

Student Notes

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Q

question – 1. [good question] a response often used when one doesn't know the answer to the question: → *Person A: If peanut oil comes from peanuts, where does baby oil come from? Person B: Good question.* 2. [out of the question] impossible: → *Eva's request for a pay raise was **out of the question**.* 3. [to be no question of] to be no doubt about: → *There was no question of his guilt.*

Student Notes

R

R and R – [rest and relaxation/recuperation/recreation] a vacation: → *Tina is working too hard; she needs a little **R and R**.*

rack – [to rack one's brain(s)] to think effortfully; to strain in order to try to remember: → *I've been **racking my brain** all morning, but I can't remember his first name.*

rage – [all the rage] popular: → *Laptop computers are **all the rage** these days.*

rain – 1. [to rain cats and dogs] to rain heavily: → *It really **rained cats and dogs** last night.* 2. [a rain check] a request for an invitation at some future date in place of one that was received but couldn't be accepted: → *We can't come to dinner tonight, but do you mind if we take a **rain check**?* 3. [rain or shine] regardless of the weather: → *The game has been scheduled for tomorrow at noon, **rain or shine**.* 4. [a rainy day] a period of need, especially when you need money: → *They save a little money each month for a **rainy day**.*

raise – 1. [to raise a stink] to complain or protest strongly; to cause a disturbance: → *The employees **raised a stink** when they were asked to work late.* 2. [to raise the roof] to complain vigorously; to become angry: → *When the boss hears about this problem, she'll **raise the roof**.*

rake – 1. [a rake-off] a share or amount taken illegally: → *The concert promoter was getting a **rake-off** of about 15%.* 2. [to rake over the coals] to reprimand severely; to scold: → *Hal was **raked over the coals** for being late.*

to **ramrod** – to forcefully lead something: → *Martin says that he's going to **ramrod** the deal through and get it approved.*

a **rat race** – tiring and usually competitive activity or rush: → *I would never want to work in New York City. I couldn't cope with the **rat race**.*

a **rave notice** – an enthusiastic appraisal or review of something: → *The newspapers gave the new movie **rave notices**. (also a **rave review**)*

a **raw deal** – unfair or unjust treatment: → *Sgt Brown feels that he got a **raw deal** with his reassignment.*

read – 1. [to read between the lines] to find a hidden meaning: → *Although she wrote that she liked her new home, I **read between the lines** that she was not very happy at all.* 2. [Read 'em and weep.] a command to look at something and accept the news as bad (from playing cards, when someone displays the winning hand to the losers): → *Here are next month's assignments, people. **Read 'em and weep**.* 3. [Read my lips.] a command to listen and carefully pay attention to what is being said: → *There will be*

no vacations taken in the month of June. **Read my lips.** No vacations in June.

ready-made – already prepared; not original: → Frank has some **ready-made** ideas that can save us time.

real – 1. [for real] truly; really; I'm not lying.: → Joe just had a bad accident, **for real**. 2. [the real McCoy/the real thing] an original; not a copy: → I thought their new Dali painting was a cheap reproduction, but it's the **real McCoy**.

to recap – to summarize: → Before continuing, we need to **recap** what we've already learned.

recon – reconnaissance: → Another plane was shot down last week while on a **recon** mission.

record – 1. [just for the record] a phrase meaning that the speaker wants everyone to remember what is being said: → **Just for the record**, I want you to know that I disagree with this proposal. 2. [off the record] not official: → The senator made it clear to the press that his comments were **off the record**. 3. [to go on record] to officially state a position: → I want to **go on record** as saying that we should not sign this contract. 4. [to set the record straight] to clarify; to explain correctly: → Let me **set the record straight** about what actually happened at that conference.

red – 1. [red-handed] in the very act of doing something wrong: → The police caught the thief **red-handed**. 2. [a red-letter day] a very special day: → It was a **red-letter day** for Troy when he won first place. 3. [red tape] official formalities causing delay: → There was a lot of **red tape** involved in getting this purchase request approved.

to reinvent the wheel – to waste time doing something that someone else has already done: → Don't **reinvent the wheel** and make a new test; just use one of the old ones.

resort – [as a last resort] as a final solution: → I'll ask for his help only **as a last resort**.

rest – 1. [at rest] reposing; motionless; asleep; dead: → My grandmother is finally **at rest**. She passed away last week. 2. [the rest is history] a phrase meaning that the listener knows the rest of the story: → They got married and were sailing for their New York honeymoon on the Titanic, and **the rest is history**. 3. [to give it a rest] to stop talking: → I don't want to hear any more about your new car. Would

you please **give it a rest**? 4. [to lay someone to rest] to bury: → My grandmother was **laid to rest last Tuesday**. 5. [to lay something to rest] to end something by proving it untrue: • He was able to **lay that story** about his foreign background **to rest** by providing his birth certificate. 6. [to rest on one's laurels] to be satisfied with the success already won; to stop trying to win new honors: → Since Leslie won first prize last year, he's **resting on his laurels now and doing nothing new**.

rich – [too rich for one's blood] too expensive: → That restaurant is **too rich for my blood**.

ride – 1. [to ride herd on] to watch closely and to control: → In order to get the report out on time, the boss **rode herd on** all of us. 2. [to ride roughshod over] to disregard the feelings of others: → Rita always **rides roughshod over** her fellow workers. 3. [to ride shotgun] to ride in the front passenger seat: → I drove the whole way. My daughter **rode shotgun**. 4. [to take someone for a ride] to cheat; to deceive; to trick: → That insurance salesman **took you for a ride** when he sold you that policy.

right – 1. [right down the line] according to standard procedures: → If you go **right down the line**, you should have no problems. 2. [a right-hand man] the main assistant: → Joe is my **right-hand man on this job**. 3. [right on the nose/button] exactly; correctly; accurately: → You hit it **right on the nose** when you said these extra reports are unnecessary. 4. [right side up] with the top side facing upward: → When I dropped the cake, it landed **right side up**, so we were able to salvage it. 5. [to give one's right arm] to make the ultimate sacrifice; to do anything: → You know I would **give my right arm** to help you, but I'm not going to lend you my car.

road – 1. [the end of the road] the final point: → I guess we've reached **the end of the road**, so let's adjourn this meeting until next week. 2. [on the road] traveling: → Her rock band has been **on the road** for seven months, so she's eager to get back home. 3. [a road hog] a driver who takes more than his part of the road, making it difficult to pass: → His new car is so big, he can't help being a **road hog**. 4. [a road map] a schematic or circuit diagram: → The technician reviewed the **road map** for the new transmitter. 5. [road rage] aggressive retaliation by an angry driver: → On the way to work this morning, I saw at least four incidents of **road rage**. 6. [to hit the road] to begin a journey: → We need to **hit the road** around 6 a.m.

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rock – [off one's rocker] insane: → *He must be off his rocker to drive through school zones so fast.*

rocky – rough, bumpy, not smooth: → *We got off to a rocky start, but things are okay now.*

roll – 1. [to be on a roll] to continue doing things correctly: → *She's on a roll. That's the fifth question in a row that she's answered correctly.* 2. [to be rolling in money/dough] to be very rich: → *He doesn't need to work. He's rolling in money.* 3. [to be rolling in the aisles] to be laughing hard: → *That comedian had us all rolling in the aisles all night.* 4. [to roll out the red carpet] to welcome with ceremony: → *They rolled out the red carpet for the governor when she arrived at the airport.* 5. [to roll up one's sleeves] to get ready to work hard: → *We need to roll up our sleeves and finish this before lunch.* 6. [to roll with the punches] to not offer much resistance in the face of problems (from the world of boxing): → *There will be a lot of problems with the new computer system at first, but if you'll just roll with the punches, you'll get through it.*

roots – [to put down roots] to stop moving and live in one place: → *My grandparents put down roots in San Antonio a long time ago, and my family still lives there.*

rope – 1. [at the end of one's rope] at the limit of one's ability to control a situation: → *John was at the end of his rope, so he didn't know what to do next.* 2. [to know/learn the ropes] to be experienced and know/learn about the job: → *Tina knows the ropes and will help you during your orientation period.*

rose-colored glasses – unrealistic optimism: → *She sees the world through rose-colored glasses.*

rough – 1. [to rough it] to live without the usual comfort and amenities of civilization: → *I like to get away to the woods on my vacation and really rough it.* 2. [roughly speaking] speaking in general; approximately: → *Roughly speaking, I would say that a hundred people were at the party.*

round – 1. [round figures] approximately: → *In round figures, about 200 guns were stolen.* 2. [round the clock] an entire day; 24 hours a day: → *We need to work round the clock in order to complete this project.* 3. [to make the rounds] to follow an established route: → *The security guard makes his rounds every 45 minutes.*

rub – 1. [rub] difficulty; complication: → *The boss wants the report now, but the rub is that we don't have all the data.* 2. [to rub elbows with] to associate closely with; to mingle with: → *She rubbed elbows with several business leaders.* 3. [to rub it in] to repeatedly remind someone of an error; to tease: → *I know I made a big mistake, but you don't have to keep rubbing it in.* 4. [to rub paint] to maneuver one airplane so close to another that they almost touch: → *The interceptor tried to rub paint with me, but I evaded him.* (also to **swap paint**) 5. [to rub someone the wrong way] to arouse displeasure; to irritate: → *Unfortunately, there's something about that new trainee that rubs me the wrong way.*

rule – 1. [as a rule] generally; usually: → *I have a car, but as a rule I like to walk to work.* 2. [a rule of thumb] a general principle regarded as roughly correct, not perfectly accurate: → *As a rule of thumb, we can usually leave at 1600.* 3. [to bend/stretch the rules] to disregard the rules because of special circumstances: → *No one is allowed to smoke in this building, but when the generals are here, we might have to bend the rules a little.* 4. [to play by the rules] to act fairly; to not cheat: → *I don't think they played by the rules when they selected the last group to get promotions.*

run – 1. [run down] (a) in poor health: → *Helen is run down from too much work.* (b) to drive over: → *The speeding car ran the little dog down.* (c) in need of repairs: → *The old house is too run down to fix.* 2. [a/to run for it] an/to escape: → *It looks like it's going to start raining, so let's make a run for it.* 3. [to run low on] to have in short supply: → *The supply sergeant reported that he's running low on copy paper.* 4. [run-of-the-mill] average; ordinary: → *This was one of those run-of-the-mill days.* 5. [to run out] to exhaust a supply; to use up: → *The young officers decided to go home before they ran out of money.* 6. [a rundown] a summary or briefing: → *Please give me a rundown on yesterday's meeting with the commander.* 7. [on the run] going or moving quickly: → *The criminals are on the run, and the police can't find them.*

Student Notes

[illegible]**S**

saber rattling – empty military threats: → *Do we need to worry about the way they've moved troops to the border, or is that just some more **saber rattling**?*

to sack out – to go to bed; to sleep: → *I'm tired, so I'll sack out early tonight.*

a **sacred cow** – any individual or organization that is above criticism: → *Don't expect the magazine to attack any of our **sacred cows**.*

saddled with – responsible for: → *Alma gets saddled with most of the problems in this office.*

salt – 1. [the salt of the earth] the best of people: ➔ *Marcella considers her friend Stephanie to be the salt of the earth.* 2. [to be worth one's salt] to work hard enough to justify one's salary: ➔ *I don't think Billy*

Ray is worth his salt around here. 3. [to take something with a grain of salt] to not pay much attention to something: → *Ignore him. You can take what he says with a grain of salt.*

save – 1. [to save one's breath] to not waste effort talking about something because it won't do any good: → *Don't try to convince him. **Save your breath.*** 2. [to save the day] to prevent something bad from happening: → *I didn't have any money with me, but Dan **saved the day** by loaning me some.* 3. [to save face] to keep one's dignity or prestige after a setback: → *He was embarrassed by the incident and tried unsuccessfully to **save face.***

say – 1. [It says a lot for....] an expression of admiration: → *It says a lot for their educational system that they get such high scores.* 2. [It says little for....] an expression of negative criticism: → *It says little for his upbringing that he has manners like that.* 3. [Never say die.] Never give up.: → *Even if the other team is beating you 15-0, never say die.* 4. [Say cheese.] An expression said by a photographer in order to get the subject to smile: → *Why do you look so sad? Say cheese.* 5. [to say a mouthful] to say something very important; to speak accurately: → *George said a mouthful when he complained about never getting any feedback from management.* 6. [say-so] one's unsupported word or assertion: → *I can't order supplies on your say-so. I need a written authorization from above.* 7. [to say the least] to understate; to express as mildly as possible: → *Rose's remark was insensitive, to say the least.* 8. [Say when.] an expression used by someone pouring a beverage or serving food that means "Tell me when to stop.": → *Person A: Have some more tea. Say when. Person B: When! Oh, that's too much.* 9. [to go without saying] to be so obvious that no one needs to say it: → *We all feel overworked today. It goes without saying. But we need to finish this as soon as possible.* 10. [Who says?/Says who?] an expression meaning, "I don't believe you.": → *Person A: Nobody will be able to park in Lot 4 tomorrow. Person B: Says who?* 11. [You can say that again.] "I agree with you completely.": → *Person A: This project has turned into a nightmare. Person B: You can say that again.*

scale – 1. [to tip the scales] to weigh a specific amount: → *I'll bet **he tips the scales** at 350 pounds.*
2. [to scale down] to reduce or shorten: → *They **scaled down** the time frame for completion of this project from three months to only one.*

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to **schmooze** – to make casual, informal conversation; to chat: → *We weren't talking about anything important, just schmoozing.*

school – 1. [of the old school] old-fashioned: → *Yvonne is of the old school. She doesn't believe in all these new managerial techniques.* 2. [a school of thought] a specific philosophy: → *There is a certain school of thought that maintains harsh discipline is the only way to raise kids.* 3. [to talk out of school] to reveal secrets; to say things that one shouldn't: → *I know I shouldn't talk out of school, but the boss absolutely hates your report.*

score – 1. [to have a score to settle] to retaliate; to return a wrong: → *Mark has had a score to settle with Lana ever since she embarrassed him in public.* 2. [to score points] to do something that impresses others: → *Frank scored a lot of points by making all those suggestions in front of the boss.*

scrape – 1. [to scrape the bottom of the barrel] to use the last and worst resources; to be forced to use desperate measures: → *Have you seen the newest trainees? We're scraping the bottom of the barrel now.* 2. [to scrape together] to assemble or collect with difficulty: → *They scraped together enough money for their trip to the coast.*

scratch – 1. [to scratch someone's back and that someone will scratch in return] to do something kind/helpful for someone in the hope that s/he will do something in return: → *I need some help with this project, so I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.* 2. [to scratch the surface] to barely begin to work on or examine: → *So far, we've just scratched the surface of this issue.*

scuttlebutt – rumor/s: → *George knows all the scuttlebutt in this office.*

seal – 1. [a seal of approval] permission to proceed: → *We can't order new furniture until we get the boss's seal of approval.* 2. [to seal the coffin] to give the final act of punishment to someone whose negative fate is already known: → *He was in danger of being fired anyway, but what sealed his coffin was when he showed up for work drunk.*

second – 1. [secondhand] previously owned or used: → *Richard couldn't afford a new car, so he bought a secondhand one.* 2. [second nature] automatic action; instinctive behavior: → *Locking the car has become second nature to her since her previous car was stolen.* 3. [second-rate] of poor

quality: → *We didn't enjoy the restaurant at all. Everything seemed second-rate.* 4. [on second thought] a change of idea or opinion resulting from more study or thought: → *On second thought, I think I'll go with you to the commissary after all.*

see – 1. [to have seen (one's) better days] to be in worse condition than before; to be almost worthless: → *Our washing machine has seen its better days.* 2. [to see eye to eye] to agree: → *Boris and I have never seen eye to eye on this, so don't expect us to suddenly start agreeing.* 3. [to see red] to become very angry: → *He saw red when he heard her criticism of his speech.* 4. [to see stars] to become dizzy by a blow to the head: → *I saw stars when I hit my head on the garage door.* 5. [to see the handwriting on the wall] to know what will happen: → *I know her job is going to be eliminated. I can see the handwriting on the wall.* 6. [to see the light] to understand: → *Lydia finally saw the light when the tutor explained the math problems to her.*

sell – 1. [to sell someone a bill of goods] to cheat someone; to persuade another to buy something which cannot be easily used or is of poor quality: → *That salesperson sold us a bill of goods when he got us to buy all that obsolete software.* 2. [to sell someone down the river] to betray someone: → *Robert sold his former business partners down the river.* 3. [to sell someone/something short] to think a person or thing has less value than is true; to underestimate: → *Don't make the mistake of selling the team short; they can win the game.*

serve – 1. [to serve a sentence] to remain in prison for a given time: → *He served a sentence of two years before he was released.* 2. [to serve someone right] to receive the punishment that one deserves: → *It served Timothy right to get that speeding ticket. He always drives too fast.* 3. [to serve someone's purpose] to satisfy a particular need: → *This room will serve our purpose until we can find another one.*

set – 1. [to be (dead) set against] to be totally opposed to: → *I'm dead set against going to lunch at that place again.* 2. [to set forth] (a) to explain exactly or clearly: → *Yesterday, the author set forth his reasons for writing the book.* (b) to start on a journey: → *The troops set forth early yesterday.* 3. [to set free] to release: → *The POWs were set free after the cease fire agreement was signed.* 4. [to set someone straight] to guide someone to the correct or proper way: → *We had been making many mistakes, but the supervisor set us straight on what to do next.*

to settle for – to accept; to agree: → *Although Isabel settled for two computers, her office needed more.*

shade – [to have it made in the shade] to have things easy; to have everything going one's way: → *He's young, handsome, rich, intelligent; he has it made in the shade.*

shadow – 1. [to cast a long shadow] to have a great influence over others → *Mohammed Ali continues to cast a long shadow over the world of boxing.* 2. [to be under the shadow of] to be dominated by: → *His country has been under the shadow of totalitarianism for decades.*

shake – 1. [to shake a leg] to hurry; to do something faster: → *You need to shake a leg. You're going to be late.* 2. [to shake loose] to release; to free: → *You need to shake loose your worries and relax.* 3. [to shake off] to lose: → *He needs to shake off his fear of snakes.* 4. [a shake-up] a big change or reorganization: → *There needs to be a shake-up in City Hall.* 5. [to shake up] to worry; to disturb: → *The news about the fire really shook up the neighbors.*

shape – 1. [to be out of shape] to be in bad physical condition: → *I used to be an Olympic gymnast, but I'm out of shape now.* 2. [to get into shape] to improve one's physical condition: → *If you want to be on the team, you need to get into shape.* 3. [to shape up or ship out] to behave as expected or face a penalty: → *The recruits arrived late and were warned to shape up or ship out.* 4. [to take shape] to develop well: → *It looks like our project is finally taking shape.*

to shed light on – to explain; to give additional information: → *Police hope the latest witness will be able to shed a little light on the killer's motive.*

shell – 1. [to come out of one's shell] to stop being shy: → *Let's make Joe go to the disco with us. He needs to come out of his shell.* 2. [to shell out] to pay money: → *My next door neighbor had to shell out five hundred dollars for car repairs.*

to shift gears – to change a topic, a position, a direction, etc.: → *The speaker shifted gears and told some serious stories.*

to shine – to be superior in something: → *I'm sure you will shine during your speech.*

shoe – 1. [if I were in (someone else's) shoes] "if I

were that person": → *I would complain to the boss if I were in your shoes.* 2. [If the shoe fits, wear it.] "If the comment applies, accept the truth.": → *I didn't say you were lazy, but if the shoe fits, wear it.* 3. [on a shoestring] with little money: → *Tony has had no job for three months, so he's living on a shoestring.* 4. [the shoe (to be) on the other foot] the opposite is happening; what a person was doing to someone is now being done to him/her: → *He was a cruel supervisor, but now that he's been demoted, the shoe is on the other foot.* 5. [to walk in someone's shoes] to be another person; to have another person's problems: → *Don't judge him until you've walked a mile in his shoes.*

a shoo-in – the certain winner: → *Everyone says she's a shoo-in to win the Oscar this year.*

shoot – 1. [to shoot from the hip] to behave or talk too quickly without thinking: → *Evan sometimes shoots from the hip when he speaks.* 2. [to shoot off one's mouth] to talk carelessly and loudly: → *He shoots off his mouth too much. People don't like to be around him.* 3. [to shoot the breeze/bull] make informal, casual conversation: → *The men like to get together and shoot the breeze.*

short – 1. [a short cut] a quick way or method of saving time: → *Let me show you a short cut to get this done.* 2. [the short end of the stick] a position of disadvantage: → *Tim got the short end of the stick when he had to work on the holiday.* 3. [short of] not having enough: → *Try to make every shot a good one. We're running short of ammo.* 4. [a short-timer] someone whose current tour of duty or enlistment is about to end: → *Gene's a short-timer now, so his work ethic is not what it used to be.*

shot – 1. [a big shot] an important person: → *Richard is a big shot in the unit, so don't argue with him.* 2. [a cheap shot] an insult that is directed at a vulnerable person: → *Did you hear that cheap shot Fred took at Joe?* 3. [like a shot] quickly; very fast: → *The clock struck five, and he was out of here like a shot.* 4. [a shot in the arm] something encouraging: → *Last night's victory was a much-needed shot in the arm for the team.* 5. [a shot in the dark] a guess; an attempt without much chance or hope of succeeding: → *The student's answer was a shot in the dark since she hadn't read the material.* 6. [one shot] one try only: → *You get only one shot at this, so you'd better make it good.* 7. [shot up] wounded: → *Although Pat was shot up in the attack, he's much better now.*

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the shotgun method/approach – a way in which several solutions are tried at once to see which one might work successfully: → *The team of scientists used the **shotgun method** to find their solution.*

shoulder – [to put one's shoulder to the wheel] to work very hard: → *If you **put your shoulder to the wheel**, we can finish sooner.*

to shove off – to leave; to depart: → *We need to **shove off** early tonight.*

show – 1. [a show of hands] a vote by a group during which hands are raised in the air: → *Let's see a **show of hands** of who wants to have the picnic next Friday.* 2. [for show] for display: → *Don't touch that cake. It's **for show** only.* 3. [It (just) goes to show....] "It always happens that way.": → *Look at all those mud puddles. It **just goes to show** that you shouldn't wash your car unless you want it to rain the next day.* 4. [to get the show on the road] to begin: → *Don't wait for latecomers. Let's **get this show on the road**.* 5. [to run the show] to be in command: → *Whenever Capt Black is gone, Capt Chu **runs the show**.* 6. [to show one's face] to dare to appear at a certain place: → *I bet that he'll never **show his face** around here again.* 7. [to show the way] to demonstrate: → *She'll **show you the way** to save your files in a folder on the network.* 8. [to show off] to try to impress; to get attention: → *He doesn't really speak Arabic. He's **showing off** again.* 9. [to steal the show] to get the most attention and praise during a performance: → *My niece **stole the show** during her school dance recital.*

a shrink – a psychologist or psychiatrist: → *My friend needs to talk with a **shrink**. He's so depressed about everything.*

sick call – the time period when one can go to the medical clinic: → *Tony isn't here. He's on **sick call**.*

silver – 1. [a silver lining] a positive feature or conclusion to an otherwise negative or difficult situation: → *Mary is very optimistic; she always sees the **silver lining** in every crisis.* 2. [to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth] to be born into a wealthy family: → *Unlike you, I was not **born with a silver spoon in my mouth**. I had to drop out of school and start working when I was 17 years old.*

sink – 1. [a sinking feeling] a negative realization that something bad is going to happen: → *I'm getting*

*this **sinking feeling** that we're going to lose the election.* 2. [to sink or swim] to fail or succeed in a situation: → *Students will either **sink or swim** in this advanced calculus course.*

sit – 1. [to be sitting on a powder keg] to be involved in a potentially explosive situation: → *We're **sitting on a powder keg** if we can't get both countries to pull their troops back from the borders.* 2. [to sit on the fence] to take a neutral position between two opposing sides: → *You can't keep **sitting on the fence** forever.* 3. [to sit tight] to wait patiently: → *I have to **sit tight** until the doctor can see me.*

a sitcom – a situation comedy show on television: → *Did anyone watch that new **sitcom** about Wall Street brokers last night?*

six – [six of one and a half dozen of the other] essentially alike; presenting similar choices: → *The choice is yours, but it seems to be **six of one and a half dozen of the other**.*

sixty-four thousand dollar question – an important and difficult question: → *Exactly why that decision was made is the **sixty-four thousand dollar question**.*

to size up the situation – to decide what one thinks about a situation: → ***Size up the situation** as soon as possible, and let me know what you think.*

by the skin of one's teeth – barely escaping or succeeding: → *We won the game by the **skin of our teeth**.*

a skunk – [the skunk at the picnic] something negative that ruins all the good things: → *I don't want to be the **skunk at the picnic**, but has anyone looked at our latest self-inspection report?*

sleeve – [up one's sleeve] keeping something secretly ready for the right time: → *That strange smile on Alexander's face made me wonder what he had **up his sleeve**.*

slip – 1. [a slip of the tongue] the mistake of saying something one didn't want or plan to say: → *It was a **slip of the tongue**, and John immediately regretted it.* 2. [to slip through one's fingers] to escape; to let get away accidentally: → *Go ahead and take the promotion. Don't let a chance like that **slip through your fingers**.*

a **slugging match** – a very hard, intense match:
→ *I hope our next briefing doesn't turn into another slugging match.*

sly – [on the sly] secretly: → *It turns out one of our managers was running a competing business on the sly.*

small – [It's a small world.] an expression used when meeting someone by surprise: → *While I was in Mexico, I saw my old college professor. It's a small world, isn't it?*

a **smart aleck** – a conceited and rude person: → *Joe is such a smart aleck that no one really likes him.*

to **smell a rat** – to become suspicious: → *I began to smell a rat when he couldn't explain why the papers had been missing for three weeks.*

smooth sailing – good progress: → *After you pass the third test, it will be smooth sailing.*

a **SNAFU** – acronym for Situation Normal, All Fouled Up; a situation complicated with typical problems: → *Just when we thought everything was fine, we hit another SNAFU.*

snag – 1. [a snag] a difficulty or problem: → *Our travel plans hit a snag when the car broke down.*
2. [to snag] to get or take quickly: → *I snagged the last chocolate doughnut from the break room.*

snail mail – mail delivered by means other than e-mail or faxes: → *My computer is down, so I asked Mark to send me the documents by snail mail.*

a **snake in the grass** – a person who cannot be trusted; one who betrays: → *Don't trust Ed. He's such a snake in the grass.*

a **snap decision** – a decision made almost instantly: → *I don't want a snap decision, so take as much time as you need.*

snow – 1. [to snowball] to rapidly increase in size or importance: → *We wanted a small wedding, but our plans snowballed, and we ended up with over 200 guests.* 2. [a snow job] exaggerated or insincere talk done in order to gain the favors of someone: → *Dan gave Rita a snow job, and she believed him.* 3. [to be snowed under] to have too much work: → *I've been snowed under with reports since my secretary retired last month.*

So far, so good. – Everything is good up to this point.: → *We expected some huge problems to crop up, but so far, so good.*

to be **sold on** – to be convinced of the value of something/someone: → *Luckily, the boss is sold on the idea of a few overseas trips for everybody each quarter.*

song – 1. [for a song] at a low price: → *I bought this car for a song.* 2. [song and dance] an old explanation, excuse, or routine that lacks relevant substance: → *He was supposed to come up with something new, but he just gave us that same old song and dance again.*

sooner – 1. [sooner or later] at some time: → *Sooner or later, I'm going to move into an apartment with better security.* 2. [the sooner, the better] a phrase indicating something needs to be done as soon as possible: → *The boss says he wants those reports on his desk...the sooner, the better.*

an **SOP** – acronym for Standard Operating Procedure; a written directive describing correct procedures: → *If Capt Blake runs the unit according to SOP, everything will be fine.*

sort of – a little; slightly: → *I'm sort of hungry now.*

to **sound off** – to complain; to speak out: → *If you don't like the plan, this is your chance to sound off.*

soup – 1. [Soup's on!] an announcement that the meal is on the table and it's time to come and eat: → *I don't care if the game they're watching has gone into overtime. Soup's on!* 2. [to soup up] to increase the capacity for speed of an engine: → *Fred souped up the engine in his race car.*

south – 1. [to go south] to decrease sharply: → *My bank balance has gone south again.* 2. [a southpaw] a left-handed person: → *I didn't know you were a southpaw.*

spam/to spam – junk e-mail sent out en masse/to send e-mail out in mass mailings: → *When I got back from vacation, I couldn't read any of my real e-mail for all the spam.*

speak – 1. [in a manner of speaking] in a way: → *Everyone is still a student, in a manner of speaking.* 2. [nothing to speak of] not good enough to talk about: → *The hotel we stayed at was nothing to*

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Speak of. 3. [so to speak] if one may use such an expression; in a way: → *He eats like a pig, so to speak.* 4. [to speak for itself/themselves] to not need explaining: → *The economy is getting worse each week. The statistics speak for themselves.* 5. [to speak of] worth mentioning: → *That comedy had no humor or jokes to speak of.* 6. [to speak one's mind/peace] to say freely or openly what one thinks: → *After he'd spoken his peace, he got up and left.* 7. [to speak out of turn] to talk when one shouldn't: → *I'm sorry I spoke out of turn like that, but I couldn't keep quiet any longer.* 8. [to speak volumes] to say a lot; to carry a lot of meaning: → *She said nothing about the broken vase, but her eyes spoke volumes.* 9. [to speak with a forked tongue] to lie; to tell the truth to some but lies to others: → *He always speaks with a forked tongue.*

Spec – abbreviation for Army Specialist rank: → *If you keep your nose clean, you should advance from Spec 4 to Spec 5 in three more months.*

the specs – specifications; a detailed description of requirements for something: → *If you don't know what to do, I suggest you look at the specs.*

speed – 1. [full speed/steam ahead] progressing without obstacles: → *Everything has been approved, so it's full speed ahead.* 2. [a speed trap] a length of roadway favored by the police to catch speeders: → *We were doing forty in a thirty-mile-an-hour zone and got caught in a speed trap.* 3. [to be up to speed] to be capable of doing the job: → *I'm afraid the new trainees are not up to speed yet.*

to spell out – to explain very carefully; to be specific: → *The officer spelled out the mission to the troops so that everyone understood what needed to be done.*

spick-and-span – very neat and tidy: → *The basic trainees got their barracks to look spick-and-span. (also spelled spic-and-span).*

to spike – to increase dramatically, so much so that a line graph of the statistics would look like a spike: → *Military enlistment always spikes like that when the economy is in bad shape.*

to spill the beans – to accidentally reveal a secret: → *No one knew that they were leaving until Kathy spilled the beans.*

spin – 1. [to put a spin on something] to explain

something in a way that justifies it favorably: → *The senator's staff tried to put a positive spin on his dropping poll numbers.* 2. [to spin one's wheels] to expend effort without accomplishing anything: → *We spun our wheels yesterday, waiting hours for the movers to arrive.*

spineless – without courage: → *Francis is a spineless manager; he can't say no to his employees.*

a spinmeister – an expert in explaining bad things in a favorable way: → *The spinmeisters are working overtime trying to discredit the negative impact of the mayor's latest scandal.*

a splash – [to make a splash] to attract attention because of success: → *The new politician really made a splash for himself in his first national election.*

split – 1. [to split hairs] to argue over minor, insignificant details: → *Joe loves to split hairs. I once heard him argue for fifteen minutes with Tom about whether their thermometer was reading 77 or 78 degrees.* 2. [to split the difference] to agree to a number halfway between two other numbers: → *The merchant wanted \$100, but I offered \$80, so we ended up splitting the difference at \$90.*

spot – 1. [in a tight spot] in trouble or difficulty: → *My uncle lost his job and is in a tight spot financially.* 2. [on the spot] (a) in difficulty or trouble: → *He was on the spot when he couldn't repay the loan.* (b) immediately: → *She went for a preliminary interview and got hired on the spot.* 3. [to put someone on the spot] to make someone feel uncomfortable or embarrassed: → *Most of the lawyer's questions put the witness on the spot.* 4. [to spot-check] to inspect only parts of something; random sampling: → *The commander won't inspect the entire installation. He'll spot-check a few departments.* 5. [a soft spot] a weakness: → *We found the soft spot in our defenses and corrected it.*

spread – 1. [to spread like wildfire] to cover an area rapidly: → *The rumor about two employees getting fired spread all over the building like wildfire.* 2. [to spread someone or something too thin] to use insufficient resources for too many needs: → *Andrea has spread herself too thin working on three projects at the same time.* 3. [to spread the word] to tell something to others: → *The assistants helped spread the word that Gloria had a baby girl yesterday.*

the spur of the moment – immediately; without consideration or thought: → *They decided to leave on the spur of the moment.*

square – 1. [a square meal] an adequate or full meal: → *The doctor said that I need to eat three square meals a day until I feel stronger.* 2. [to square something away] to put something in order: → *I need to square away some paperwork before I leave for lunch.* 3. [back to square one] back to the beginning: → *The boss totally rejected everything about our proposal, so it's back to square one as of today.*

a squawk box – the mike/speaker of an intercom system: → *The quickest way to inform them is to use the squawk box.*

squeeze – [to put the squeeze on] to put pressure in order to achieve a goal: → *The bank put the squeeze on John by forcing him to sell his car in order to repay the loan.*

a stab – 1. [a stab in the dark] a wild guess: → *If you don't know the answer, you can make a stab in the dark.* 2. [to make a stab at] to attempt; to try: → *I'm not sure that I can finish the report in time, but I'll make a stab at it.* 3. [to stab someone in the back] to betray someone: → *Marsha stabbed me in the back by secretly talking to my boss about my idea.*

stack – 1. [to stack the deck] to arrange things unfairly for or against someone: → *I thought I had a chance at getting the scholarship, but the deck was stacked against me.* 2. [to stack up] to compare: → *How does Bill stack up against the other members of the team?*

to staff something – to tell something to members of a staff for their opinion: → *Let's staff the idea and get their opinions.*

a stalemate – a situation without advantage for either side: → *Contract negotiations ended in a stalemate.*

stand – 1. [to stand a chance] to have a possibility of succeeding: → *He doesn't think they stand a chance of getting the contract.* 2. [to stand on ceremony] to use very formal manners: → *Don't feel a need to stand on ceremony. Go through the buffet line in any order whenever you want to.* 3. [to stand on one's own feet] to be independent: → *Experience had taught Sam to stand on his own feet.*

to start from scratch – to start at the very beginning, often with very few materials or resources: → *This report is so poorly written that it would be better to start from scratch and create a new one.*

state-of-the-art – most recent and best in terms of technology: → *The students at my son's university are being provided state-of-the-art classroom and lab equipment.*

staying power – ability to resist; endurance: → *I respect her staying power in the face of such problems.*

steal – 1. [a steal] a great bargain: → *That particular tire is a steal at sixty dollars.* 2. [to steal one's thunder] to present something before another person who has already thought of it has a chance to present it: → *Phil stole Isabel's thunder when he presented her idea as his own.*

steam – [to run out of steam] to get tired; to run out of energy: → *I'm running out of steam, so let's take a break.*

step – 1. [in step] in agreement: → *Since we're all in step on this, we don't need to discuss it any longer.* 2. [out of step] unable to share in the interests and attitudes of others: → *Because he had been raised overseas, he felt out of step with the other kids in his new school.* 3. [to be one step ahead] to be slightly advanced: → *He always reads an extra chapter so that he can be one step ahead of his classmates.* 4. [to step on one's toes] to offend or antagonize someone: → *I didn't mean to step on anyone's toes, but you did ask me what I thought.* 5. [to step on the gas] to increase one's speed or to work harder: → *Marilyn stepped on the gas and finished her project ahead of schedule.* 6. [to step out of line] to act in a way that is different or socially unacceptable: → *When the reporter asked the senator's wife about her divorce, I thought he had stepped way out of line.*

stick – 1. [a big stick] a powerful force: → *Remember that Teddy Roosevelt advised leaders to speak softly but carry a big stick.* 2. [a stick-in-the-mud] a dull, boring person: → *Don't invite him to the party. He's a stick-in-the-mud.* 3. [sticky-fingered] in the habit of stealing things: → *Some sticky-fingered person took all the coins out of my desk drawer.* 4. [to get on the stick] to become serious and start working: → *I need to get on the stick and finish my book report.* 5. [to stick around]

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to remain in the area: → *Andre needs to stick around a few more minutes.* 6. [to stick it out] to endure; to not quit: → *You need to stick it out with this class. You're almost done.* 7. [to stick one's neck out] to act boldly despite the risk of danger, trouble, or criticism; to take a chance: → *Lisa is always willing to stick her neck out to help a friend.* 8. [to stick to one's guns] to hold to an idea or opinion even though others try to change it or criticize: → *We thought the entire project should be canceled, but Joe stuck to his guns and said it was feasible.* 9. [sticky] difficult; tricky; awkward: → *The student asked a sticky question which no one was willing to answer.*

stitches – [in stitches] laughing very hard: → *Henry keeps us in stitches with his stories.*

stock – [to put stock in] to believe; to have faith in: → *I don't put stock in what Andy told us since he's always lying.*

a stone's throw – a short distance: → *She lives just a stone's throw from the school.*

straight – 1. [a straight face] not showing any emotion: → *I don't know how you kept a straight face when that guy was mispronouncing all our names.* 2. [straight away] immediately: → *Report to the dispensary straight away.* 3. [straight from the horse's mouth] directly from the person or place where something began; from a reliable source: → *If you think Bob got the promotion, let's just ask him and get the information straight from the horse's mouth.* 4. [the straight and narrow] proper conduct; integrity: → *When I went away to college, my father told me to follow the straight and narrow.* 5. [to get something straight] to come to an understanding; to understand the facts: → *Let's get something straight here. I'm the boss, and you're not.* 6. [to straighten out] to take action to correct someone/something: → *Robert needs to straighten out the summer hires in his office.*

stride – [in stride] without reacting; without getting excited: → *Mary took the insult in stride and continued working.*

to string someone along – to deceive someone; to fool someone: → *Joe always strings people along with promises he doesn't keep.*

to surf the net – to check various sites on the Internet: → *When Tom bought his new computer, he spent hours every evening surfing the net.*

suspect – [the usual suspects] the same people as always: → *No one except the usual suspects signed up for the next seminar.*

to swallow one's pride – to admit that one is wrong; to apologize: → *I know it's hard for you to swallow your pride, but in this case, you are definitely wrong.*

to be swamped – to have too much work: → *Since the employees were so swamped, they couldn't finish the project.*

a swan song – one's final effort or appearance before death or retirement (from the old belief that dying swans start singing): → *I hope that speech doesn't turn out to be the general's swan song.*

sweat – 1. [Don't sweat the small stuff.] "Don't worry about the little things." → *With all the huge problems around here, don't sweat the small stuff.* 2. [to sweat blood] to worry; to work very hard: → *I was sweating blood during the final physics exam.* 3. [to sweat it out] to wait uncertainly or anxiously; to endure until the end: → *We'll have to sweat it out until we know our exam scores.*

swoop – [at/in one fell swoop] all at once: → *Yesterday, the new boss got rid of seven mid-level managers at one fell swoop.*

Student Notes

T

the tail end – the end part: → *We arrived so late that we saw only the **tail end** of the movie.*

tailor-made – exactly right for a certain person, place, situation, etc.: → *That sergeant is **tailor-made** for this mission.*

take – 1. [to take a breather] to take time off from a job for relaxation: → *After five hours of working on his new computer, Jack finally had to **take a breather**.* 2. [to take cover] to hide: → ***Take cover!** There's bound to be incoming fire!* 3. [to take a dig at someone] to make an unkind remark: → *The sergeant **took a dig at me** because he's still mad.* 4. [to take a hard look at something] to inspect or look at something very closely: → *The colonel will **take a hard look at** our recommendations.* 5. [to take heart] to become more confident or encouraged: → ***Take heart, people.** We're minutes away from finishing this.* 6. [take it from me] believe me: → *Next Monday has been declared a holiday. You can **take it from me**.* 7. [to take it on the chin] to suffer without complaining; to receive punishment without reacting: → *The colonel chewed Sgt Smith out for twenty minutes, but the sergeant just stood there and **took it on the chin**.* 8. [to take it or leave it] to accept something as it is or go away: → *Ten thousand dollars is our final offer. **Take it or leave it**.* 9. [to take someone for a ride] to cheat, deceive, or trick someone: → *Whoever sold you that gold coin **took you for a ride**. It's not gold.* 10. [to take the bull by the horns] to approach a problem or difficulty directly: → *You'll have to **take the bull by the horns** and get the job done.* 11. [to take the floor] to stand up in order to speak to a group: → *I'm going to let Anne **take the floor** now and finish the presentation.* 12. [to take steps] to act; to start some action: → *We have **taken steps** to spray the rooms and kill the ants.*

tale – 1. [a tall tale] an exaggerated story: → *Only two children in the class believed the guest speaker's **tall tale**.* 2. [to tell tales out of school] to say something that one shouldn't; to reveal something confidential: → *I don't want to **tell tales out of school**, but I think one of our coworkers got arrested last night.*

talk – 1. [back talk] a rude reply: → *The teacher told the students that she would tolerate no **back talk** from them.* 2. [to talk a blue streak] to talk too much, too fast: → *That new kid can sure **talk a blue streak***

when the subject is baseball. 3. [to talk shop] to discuss business matters: → *They promised they wouldn't **talk shop** at dinner.* 4. [to talk someone into something] to convince or persuade someone: → *I'll try to **talk him into** going to lunch with us.* 5. [to talk the talk and walk the walk] to be all talk and no action; to be unable to do what one says one can or will do: → *Sure, Joe can **talk the talk**, but can he **walk the walk**?*

a **tangent** – [to go off on a tangent] to start talking about something unrelated to the topic at hand: → *I don't like to be in meetings with Melissa when she goes off on a wild **tangent** about something.*

to **tangle with** – to argue or fight with someone: → *No one wants to **tangle with** that drill sergeant.*

to **tank** – to fail totally and rapidly: → *The studio thought their latest film would be a blockbuster, but it **tanked** completely its first weekend in wide release.*

target – 1. [off target] not correct; inappropriate: → *Matt's calculations were **off target**, so we'll have to begin again.* 2. [on target] correct; headed in the right direction: → *We're right **on target** for an early completion date.*

to **tear along** – to go fast; to proceed rapidly: → *They **tore along** the highway at 90 mph.*

to be **teed off** – to be annoyed, angered, irritated: → *Arthur was really **teed off** because we were an hour late.*

thick – 1. [a thick skin] not easily hurt by criticism: → *If you're going to work with these people, you'll need to have a very **thick skin**.* 2. [(as) thick as thieves] friendly with each other, sometimes in a conspiratorial way: → *They didn't like each other at first, but now they're as **thick as thieves**.* 3. [thick-headed] not smart; unable to learn or understand new material: → *He's not as **thick-headed** as I first thought he was.* 4. [through thick and thin] to go through good as well as bad times: *I'll stay with you **through thick and thin**.* 5. [to lay it on thick] to praise something too much, losing sincerity in the process: → *You were **laying it on a little thick** during the meeting, weren't you?*

thing – 1. [all things being equal] if none of the other factors matter: → *We have the same evaluations, so **all things being equal**, he should get the promotion.* 2. [(the) first thing] before anything else: → *I need to talk to you **first thing** tomorrow*

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morning. 3. [for one thing] the first reason: → *I'm unhappy. For one thing, my car wouldn't start this morning, and for another, I left all my work at home.* 4. [the thing is...] the important matter or fact is...: → *The thing is, the weatherman says it's going to rain tomorrow.* 5. [to be just one of those things] to be something that we must accept because of inevitability: → *Babies are going to cry all night. It's just one of those things.* 6. [to do one's own thing] to do something that interests a person; to do something the way one wants to do it, not necessarily the way others do it: → *You have to work as part of a team now. We can't let you do your own thing all day.* 7. [to have a thing for] to like something a lot: → *She has a thing for chocolate ice cream.* 8. [to make a (big) thing out of] to stress or overemphasize something that's not that important: → *It was a joke. You don't need to make a big thing out of it.*

think – 1. [to think better of] to reconsider; to think again and retract: → *I was going to take yesterday off but thought better of it.* 2. [to think little of] to have a low opinion of → *I think very little of his proposal.* 3. [to think the world of] to have a very high opinion of: → *Professor Smith thinks the world of her new class.*

a thorn in someone's side – a constant bother or annoyance: → *The new tax bill is a thorn in the governor's side.*

throw – 1. [to throw good money after bad] to continue putting money into a bad investment: → *Walt keeps throwing good money after bad trying to repair that old car.* 2. [to throw the book at someone] to give a person the maximum punishment: → *The judge will throw the book at you if you don't show a little contrition.*

thumb – 1. [to be all thumbs] to be awkward; to be clumsy: → *Don't ask me to slice the cake. I'm all thumbs today.* 2. [to thumb a ride] to hitchhike; to solicit or beg a ride from a motorist: → *It's against the law to thumb a ride on some highways.* 3. [to thumb through] to examine briefly: → *Thumb through this report and see how it looks to you.* 4. [thumbs down] a negative decision: → *I'm afraid it's thumbs down on your vacation request.* 5. [under one's thumb] being obedient to another; being under someone's control: → *That father has his children under his thumb twenty-four hours a day.*

to be tied up – to be busy: → *Paul was supposed to go to lunch, but he got tied up at the office.*

tight – 1. [tight-fisted] unwilling to spend any money unnecessarily: → *Sylvia is very tight-fisted, so she won't want to go to lunch with us.* 2. [a tight spot] a difficult situation: → *I'm in a tight spot, so I was hoping you could lend me some money.* 3. [a tightwad] someone who is unwilling to spend money unnecessarily; cheap; not generous: → *That tightwad Ruben won't donate any money.*

time – 1. [about time] not early, perhaps a little late: → *He finally washed his car, and about time too.* 2. [ahead of time] earlier than scheduled: → *She finished her report two weeks ahead of time.* 3. [behind time] late: → *The train is running a little behind time today.* 4. [for the time being] right now; meanwhile: → *He is working out of Office 213 for the time being.* 5. [Time is of the essence.] Time is very important.: → *Time is of the essence, so get those reports finished as soon as you can.* 6. [Time is running short.] Not much time is left.: → *Time is running short, so let's wrap this up now.* 7. [time to kill] extra time: → *We have some time to kill before the meeting, so let's get a cup of coffee.* 8. [to keep up with the times] to stay current: → *That company went out of business because they couldn't keep up with the times.*

to be toast – to be ruined; to be destroyed; to have lost: → *If the boss hates your report as much as he hated Joe's, both of you are toast.*

toe – 1. [to toe the line/mark] to be careful to do what one is supposed to do; to obey the rules: → *He's the kind of leader who expects his troops to toe the line.* 2. [on one's toes] alert: → *You've got to be on your toes all the time when you work as an air traffic controller.*

tongue – 1. [on the tip of one's tongue] at the point of remembering: → *His name is on the tip of my tongue, but I can't remember it.* 2. [to bite one's tongue] to refrain from saying what one wants to say: → *I had to bite my tongue during the meeting when the boss asked for suggestions.* 3. [tongue in cheek] jokingly; not seriously: → *Everything he said was tongue in cheek. Don't take it seriously.*

tooth – 1. [long in the tooth] old: → *He's starting to look a little long in the tooth. Isn't it time to retire?* 2. [to get one's teeth into something] to eagerly start something: → *I can't wait to get my teeth into her new novel.* 3. [to go through something with a fine-toothed comb] to examine closely: → *The police are going through his apartment with a fine-*

toothed comb looking for more evidence. 4. [tooth and nail] → using all methods of fighting and as hard as possible: → *They fought **tooth and nail** to save the old library from being torn down.*

top – 1. [from the top] from the beginning: → *Let's start the review **from the top**.* 2. [off the top of one's head] without thinking; without verifying the accuracy of something: → *I can't give you an exact figure **off the top of my head**, but I think the population is about 600,000.* 3. [on top] at the highest level; successful: → *During the finals, our team was **on top**.* 4. [on top of] actively dealing with the problem; able to control the matter: → *Gloria is always **on top of** the issues in her department.* 5. [over the top] exceeding past achievements: → *Last year, our company went **over the top** in sales, so we won the annual award.* 6. [the top brass] the high-ranking officers: → *The **top brass** will be here today at 1300, so let's get everything ready.*

touch – 1. [a soft touch] a person who is easily used by others; a person who can be taken advantage of: → *Ask Tom for a donation. He's such a **soft touch**.* 2. [touch-and-go] with the risk that something bad could happen: → *The skirmish was **touch-and-go** until the reinforcements arrived.* 2. [touchy] very sensitive; quick to overreact: → *Why is Frank so **touchy** today?*

a tough row to hoe – a hard life to live: → *Sylvia has had a **tough row to hoe** since her husband died last month.*

towel – [to throw in the towel] to quit; to stop; (from the world of boxing where throwing a towel into the center of the ring signals one side wants to stop the fight): → *I thought he would argue his position for a lot longer, but he **threw in the towel** after only a few minutes.*

to trade in – to exchange: → *Michele needs to **trade in** her old car.*

a traffic jam – slowing or stopping of traffic: → *We were late because of the **traffic jam** at the main gate.*

tree – 1. [up a tree] in a difficult situation that is hard to get out of or escape; in trouble: → *I found myself **up a tree** during the briefing since I didn't have my notes with me.* 2. [to not see the forest for the trees] to be so preoccupied with the little details that one cannot understand the overall situation] →

His problem, as one of our lowest-level accountants, is that he can't see the forest for the trees.

trenches – [in the trenches] involved in real situations; doing the hard low-level work: → *I haven't been a manager forever; I spent my early years **in the trenches** just like everybody.*

trick – 1. [a bag of tricks] entertaining methods of doing things: → *I brought out my entire **bag of tricks**, but I still couldn't keep the students awake.* 2. [every trick in the book] every possible method: → *We tried **every trick in the book**, but we couldn't get the baby to stop crying.* 3. [to be up to one's old tricks] to be acting funny or mischievous the way one always does: → *Things had been rather calm for a couple of days, but now Jack is **up to his old tricks** again.* 4. [to do the trick] to be exactly what was needed: → *Drinking a glass of water **did the trick**.* 5. [the tricks of the trade] knowledge, skills, information known to those who perform a particular job: → *Alice has worked here for years. She knows all the **tricks of the trade**.*

trigger happy – overanxious; nervous: → *Bob is a little **trigger happy**, so I hope he doesn't do something he may regret.*

turn – 1. [as it turns out] the way it happened; the real situation: *I thought he was a janitor, but, **as it turns out**, he was the principal.* 2. [in turn] one after the other in order: → *Each witness was **questioned in turn** by the police.* 3. [to take turns] to do something one after another: → *The four of us **took turns** driving.* 4. [to turn over a new leaf] to change for the better: → *The judge told Joe that he'd better **turn over a new leaf**.* 5. [to turn someone loose] to release: → *The police **turned the boys loose** because they were innocent.* 6. [to turn the tables] to reverse the situation: → *They beat us badly last night, but tonight we hope to **turn the tables** on them.*

twenty-four seven – twenty-four hours, seven days a week; nonstop: → *During the crisis two years ago, this steel factory was in operation **twenty-four seven**.*

twenty-twenty hindsight – the ability to detect errors after they have been made but not before: → *We don't need your **twenty-twenty hindsight** now. Why didn't you say something like this at the first meetings?*

two – 1. [That makes two of us.] "I am in the same situation as you.": → *If your car is giving you*

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problems, **that makes two of us**. 2. [to put in one's two cents worth] to give one's opinion, no matter how insignificant others might think it: → *I didn't want the meeting to end until I'd at least put in my two cents worth*. 3. [to put two and two together] to draw conclusions from observable data: → *Seeing Gregory in the florist shop, I put two and two together and figured he was buying flowers for his wife*.

two-faced – disloyal or untrustworthy: → *Be careful of Benjamin. He's two-faced and will tell others your secrets*.

Student Notes

U-W

uncle – [to say/cry "Uncle!"] to admit defeat; to agree to give up; to concede to the opponent: → *The boys were rolling around on the ground fighting, but neither one was willing to say "Uncle!"*

up – 1. [on the up and up] honest or legitimate: → *Joe wasn't sure if the deal was on the up and up, so he didn't sign the papers*. 2. [to be up to something] to be planning or doing something secretly: → *The children are too quiet. They must be up to something*. 3. [up and running] operational; ready to use: → *My computer has been up and running since 0700 this morning*.

use – 1. [can/could use something] to need or want something in order to feel better: → *After that big lunch, I could really use a nap*. 2. [to use one's head] to think intelligently: → *Those boys need to use their heads and not commit mischief like that*.

a VIP – a very important person: → *We're expecting a VIP from the Pentagon tomorrow*.

wait – 1. [to wait a minute/second] hold on; pause: → *Wait a minute. I'll be right back*. 2. [to wait and see] to not proceed until more information is received: → *We don't know who is going to get the award. We'll just have to wait and see*. 3. [to wait it out] to not do anything yet; to relax: → *Don't try to move the vehicles during a storm like this. Just wait it out*. 4. [(some disaster) waiting to happen] something that will end in failure or calamity: → *My cousin's marriage is a train wreck waiting to happen*.

wake – 1. [to wake up and smell the coffee] to become aware of and accept reality: → *You need to wake up and smell the coffee if you plan to graduate this summer*. 2. [to wake up on the wrong side of the bed] to awake in a bad mood: → *Rudy woke up on the wrong side of the bed, so don't talk to him yet*.

to walk the walk (after talking the talk) – to do what one says one can do: → *True, Joe can talk the talk, but he can't walk the walk*.

wall – 1. [to have one's back to/against the wall] trapped with no way to escape; in bad trouble: → *Joe, totally unprepared, had his back to the wall when the boss asked him to lead the meeting*. 2. [to drive someone up the wall] to drive someone crazy; to irritate someone: → *The way he was talking nonstop, I thought he was going to drive me up the wall*. 3. [off the wall] totally unexpected; unrelated to the current topic: → *We were talking about our various projects when he started making these off-the-wall comments about sports*. 4. [to run into a stone/brick wall] to be unable to penetrate or proceed: → *Every time I try to implement a change, I run into a brick wall. The bosses don't want to take a chance on anything new*.

wallop – [to pack a wallop] to have a big impact emotionally: → *The final scene of the movie packs a huge wallop*.

a war of nerves – a psychological conflict: → *It's been a real war of nerves around here with the two new assistant vice-presidents vying for dominance*.

wash – 1. [to all come out in the wash] to work out satisfactorily in the end: → *Don't worry about it now. It'll all come out in the wash.* 2. [to wash one's hands of something] to refuse any responsibility for: → *He said that he's washing his hands of the matter.* 2. [washed up] being a failure; having no future: → *That old actor is completely washed up and can't find another job.*

to waste one's breath – to argue without getting results: → *Don't waste your breath trying to convince Richard. He won't change his opinion.*

watch – 1. [on one's watch] while one is in charge: → *The equipment failure happened on your watch, so you're the one who has to write the report.* 2. [to watch one's step/tongue] to be careful of what one does or says: → *You need to watch your step around the new foreman, and Joe needs to watch his tongue.*

water – 1. [It's water under the bridge.] Something happened in the past and cannot be changed now.: → *It's water under the bridge now, so I don't want to discuss it anymore.* 2. [like water off a duck's back] having no effect; without changing one's feelings or opinions: → *Their advice to Bob was ignored; it was like water off a duck's back.* 3. [to be in hot water] to be in serious trouble: → *Tommy wrecked the family car. He's in hot water now.* 4. [to not hold water] to not seem truthful: → *That story he told does not hold water.*

waves – [to make waves] to create problems: → *You don't want to make waves your first few weeks at a new job.*

way – 1. [any (which) way you slice it] from any perspective that you view it: → *He committed a crime. Any which way you slice it, he is a criminal.* 2. [by the way] incidentally: → *We had a great time at the party. Where were you by the way?* 3. [in a big way] a lot; very much: → *My son wants to go to the zoo in a big way.* 4. [to have it both ways] to favor both sides of an issue: → *You can't have it both ways. Either you are or you're not in favor of working overtime next Saturday.* 5. [to have one's own way] to do as one wishes: → *Jane's little brother is spoiled because her parents let him have his own way all the time.* 6. [no way] no chance; not at all: → *Joe wanted to borrow my car. I said, "No way."*

wear – 1. [wear and tear] normal usage of an item: → *The warranty on the refrigerator doesn't cover*

damage from normal wear and tear. 2. [to wear two hats] to assume the duties of two jobs at the same time: → *Maria wears two hats in this company. She's the president and the chief financial officer.* 3. [to wear out one's welcome] to visit someone too long or return so often that one is no longer welcome: → *My cousins are wearing out their welcome; they've been staying with me for over five weeks.*

to weasel out – to not do something as promised: → *Yesterday, Hank weaseled out and didn't help me move my furniture.*

weather – 1. [to be under the weather] to be feeling unwell: → *I was feeling under the weather last week. I think I had the flu.* 2. [to weather (out) a storm] to wait until something bad passes: → *Don't panic about all the new changes. We'll weather out the storm somehow.*

to weed out – to sort out, to select and discard the bad: → *We had to weed out most of the applications before we found three promising ones.*

weight – [to put on weight] to gain weight: → *He has put on a lot of weight lately since he stopped exercising.*

well on the way to – making great progress toward a goal: → *She's well on her way to getting a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.*

well-off – prosperous; financially secure: → *His family was so well-off that he never had to work.*

well put – clearly expressed: → *Joe's objections were well put, so he eventually convinced us to change the report.*

wet – 1. [to be wet behind the ears] to be inexperienced; to be new to the job; usually referring to some young individual: → *The new troops are still wet behind the ears, so give them a lot of instruction.* 2. [a wet blanket] a boring person who keeps others from having fun: → *Don't invite Joe to the party. He's such a wet blanket.*

whack – [out of whack] not functioning correctly; not balanced, ordered, or sequenced correctly: → *I don't understand why all of these numbers are out of whack.*

Whatever. – an all-purpose expletive that means "You can say anything you want to say, but I'm not

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listening to you anymore.”: → Person A: *I told you to clean up your room!* Person B: **Whatever**.

a **white lie** – a harmless lie told to comfort someone: → *Rather than hurt his feelings, we told him a little white lie about how nice his new haircut looked.*

whitewash – 1. (noun) a cover up: → *The final report about the accident was nothing but a whitewash.* 2. (verb) to cover up: → *I'm sure they will whitewash the entire incident.*

a **whole ball of wax** – the entire thing; everything: → *The customer doesn't want just a new instruction book; she wants the whole ball of wax.*

a **wild-goose chase** – a useless or hopeless activity: → *The boss sent us on a wild-goose chase. We spent a lot of time getting nothing done.*

wimp – a weak person; a coward: → *Don't be such a wimp! Just do your share of the work and stop complaining.*

to wind up – to conclude; to finish: → *We need to wind up our meeting before 1600.*

wing – 1. [to take someone under one's wing] to offer to help a newer person understand a job or situation: → *I was totally lost until Mr. Smith took me under his wing.* 2. [to wing it] to do something without any practice: → *I don't have any prepared remarks, but I can wing it.*

wishy-washy – without an opinion of one's own: → *Henry can be very wishy-washy about a lot of things at the office.*

a **wolf in sheep's clothing** – a person who pretends to be good but is really bad: → *Be careful whenever Joe offers to help you with your reports. He can be a wolf in sheep's clothing.*

the **woods** – [out of the woods] out of danger or a bad situation; finished with a project or assignment: → *We're not out of the woods yet. The supervisors haven't signed their memos of agreement.*

word – 1. [by word of mouth] from person to person by the spoken word: → *The good news was spread by word of mouth.* 2. [from the word go] from the beginning: → *I knew he was lying from the word go, so I never believed his story.* 3. [the last/final word] the final remark in an argument: →

Joe put in the last word. 4. [not in so many words] a phrase meaning the speaker would not say it exactly that way: → Person A: *Did he say he hates me?* Person B: *Not in so many words, but he doesn't want to go to lunch with us.* 5. [to not get a word in edgewise] to try to make a comment when someone else is talking too much: → *I tried to apologize, but I couldn't get a word in edgewise.* 6. [to put in a word for someone/ something] to speak well of someone: → *If only the other managers would put in a word for her, she'd probably get the promotion.* 7. [to put words in someone's mouth] to assume a meaning not intended: → *Please, don't put words in my mouth. That's not what I said.* 8. [word for word] verbatim; everything that was said: → *Please tell us, word for word, what the robber said to you.*

worms – [a bucket/can of worms] a complicated or unclear situation: → *I haven't been able to find the solution to this problem; it's turned into a bucket of worms.*

to be worth one's salt – to be of great value: → *Max was worth his salt today. He solved all of my computer problems.*

to be wrapped up in – to give full time or attention to: → *Steve is not joining us tonight. He's all wrapped up in some new video game he bought.*

write – 1. [to be written on someone's face] to be obvious: → *He said he was innocent, but his guilt was clearly written on his face.* 2. [to write off as a loss] to consider as damaged or ruined: → *The hurricane destroyed our house, so we had to write it off as a loss.* 3. [to write something off] to treat as a reimbursable business expense: → *I was able to write the dinner off on my company account because we discussed a lot of business matters.*

