

LESSON 12

BOB'S BIG COOKIE ORDER

The family is gathered around the dinner table. Bob tells them about his deal with the Village Market. He asks his kids for help baking the cookies.

Bob: I know I've been **down in the dumps** since I got fired, but **things are looking up** now. The Village Market wants to sell our cookies.

Nicole: That's great news, Dad!

Bob: We're going to have to bake **like crazy** over the weekend. They want 2,000 cookies by Monday.

Nicole: Two thousand cookies in three days? Don't you think you've **bitten off more than you can chew**?

Ted: Yeah, you're going to be **running around like a chicken with its head cut off**!

Susan: Fortunately, there are four of us here. You kids will have to **pitch in** too.

Nicole: Sorry, but I can't. I have to finish Ted's chemistry homework and then I've got to **get going** on my election speech.

Bob: What's that about doing Ted's chemistry homework?

Ted: **Never mind!** Amber will **help out** with the cookies instead of Nicole.

Susan: **For heaven's sake,** Nicole! It's **like pulling teeth** getting you to do any work around here.



IDIOMS – LESSON 12

(to) bite off more than one can chew – to take on more than one is capable of; to take on too much

EXAMPLE 1: Jennifer is having a dinner party for 50 people, and she can't even cook. I think she's **bitten off more than she can chew**.

EXAMPLE 2: You agreed to host 50 exchange students from Korea? Aren't you afraid you've **bitten off more than you can chew**?

SYNONYM: to be *or* to get in over one's head. Example: Jennifer is in **over her head** with this dinner party!

(to be) down in the dumps – *see Lesson 5*

for heaven's sake! – A way of expressing emotions such as surprise, outrage, or impatience

EXAMPLE 1: Hurry up, **for heaven's sake!** You're going to be late for school.

EXAMPLE 2: Oh, **for heaven's sake!** Yesterday, I made three dozen chocolate chip cookies, and today there's only one cookie left!

SYNONYMS: for God's sake, for goodness sake, for Pete's sake

(to) get going – to get started on something; to set off for a destination; to leave

EXAMPLE 1: If you don't **get going** on your homework soon, you're going to be up all night.

EXAMPLE 2: We'd better **get going** to the restaurant now. Otherwise, we'll be late for our seven o'clock reservation.

SYNONYMS: to get a move on; to get the show on the road

(to) help out – to give assistance; to help

EXAMPLE 1: Amber offered to **help out** in the kitchen by chopping nuts.

EXAMPLE 2: I'd be happy to **help out** by baking cookies for the picnic.

SYNONYM: to lend a hand

like a chicken with its head cut off – in a hysterical manner; in a frenzy; in a very nervous way

EXAMPLE 1: Ken was late for work, and he couldn't find his car keys. He was running around his apartment **like a chicken with its head cut off**.

EXAMPLE 2: Patricia ran around the school looking for her lost backpack **like a chicken with its head cut off**.

NOTE: This idiom is usually used with the phrase "to run around" as in the above examples.

like crazy – with great speed or enthusiasm

EXAMPLE 1: When Pete Sampras won the tennis match, the crowd started cheering **like crazy**.

EXAMPLE 2: Ann ran **like crazy**, but she still didn't manage to catch the bus.

like pulling teeth – very difficult

EXAMPLE 1: It's **like pulling teeth** getting Max to talk about his girlfriend.

EXAMPLE 2: Kyle hates to study. It's **like pulling teeth** getting him to do his homework every night.

never mind – don't worry about something; forget it; it doesn't matter

EXAMPLE 1: You forgot to pick up eggs at the supermarket? **Never mind**. I'll get them tomorrow morning.

EXAMPLE 2: **Never mind** what your friends say. You need to do what you think is right.

(to) pitch in – to help

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole offered to **pitch in** and clean up her neighborhood beach. She picked up five plastic cups and an old towel.

EXAMPLE 2: If you need my help, just ask. I'd be happy to **pitch in**.

SYNONYMS: to lend a hand, to lend a helping hand; to help out

(to) run around – to move about quickly

EXAMPLE 1: I've been **running around** all day making final arrangements for our trip to Costa Rica tomorrow.

EXAMPLE 2: Debbie is exhausted. She **ran around** town all day today.

things are looking up – things are improving

EXAMPLE 1: Elizabeth found a wonderful new job and just moved into a beautiful new apartment. **Things are looking up** for her.

EXAMPLE 2: **Things are looking up** with the economy.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) When the sun doesn't shine all winter, it's easy to start feeling down in the _____.
a) dumps b) crazy c) luck
- 2) Things were so busy at work, I spent the entire week running around like a chicken with its _____ cut off.
a) beak b) head c) neck
- 3) According to today's newspaper, the economy is improving. Things are looking _____.
a) up b) down c) forward
- 4) I thought you could help me with my new project. But if you're too busy, never _____. I'll find somebody else.
a) bother b) mind c) worry
- 5) For heaven's _____! If you don't stop playing those video games, you'll never get your homework done.
a) angels b) sake c) benefit
- 6) When the school asked Susan to bring cookies to the bake sale, she said she'd be happy to help _____.
a) in b) about c) out
- 7) When my friend John told me how busy he was preparing for his Halloween party, I offered to pitch _____.
a) in b) out c) him
- 8) It's like pulling _____ getting Nicole to help out in the kitchen.
a) hair b) nails c) teeth

★ BONUS PRACTICE

Choose the best substitute for the phrase in bold:

- 1) Janice is doing all the cooking for her daughter's wedding. I think she's **bitten off more than she can chew**.
 - a) accepted too little responsibility
 - b) taken too much food into her mouth
 - c) taken on more than she can handle
- 2) If Nicole is going to cover her entire school with election posters, she'd better **get going on** them immediately.
 - a) start working on
 - b) stop working on
 - c) start destroying
- 3) If you get tired of mowing the lawn, I'd be happy to **help out**.
 - a) confuse you
 - b) do nothing
 - c) assist you
- 4) Last year, Bill opened a store selling gourmet pet food. This year, he'll open 10 more stores. His business is growing **like crazy**!
 - a) very quickly
 - b) very slowly
 - c) despite being a crazy idea
- 5) Ever since receiving his rejection letter from Princeton University, Jason has been **down in the dumps**.
 - a) happy
 - b) sad
 - c) encouraged
- 6) For a long time, Michelle couldn't find a boyfriend. But now **things are looking up**. She met a nice guy last weekend.
 - a) her love life is getting even worse
 - b) her love life is improving
 - c) her love life couldn't get much worse

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