

LESSON 16

BOB BRINGS THE COOKIES TO THE VILLAGE MARKET

Bob brings Carol the cookies. He tells Carol that baking the cookies was easy because he had lots of help.

Carol: Bob, how did the baking go?

Bob: Slow **at first**, but we're **getting the hang of it**.

Carol: Once you **learn the ropes**, it becomes **second nature**.

Bob: **To tell you the truth**, I thought that baking 2,000 cookies would be a **pain in the neck**. But we managed to **round up** some helpers, and it was a **piece of cake**.

Carol: Well, thanks for coming **in person** with the cookies.

Bob: No problem. When will you need more?

Carol: It depends on how many we sell today.

Bob: How many do you think you'll sell?

Carol: Maybe 500, maybe 2,000. **Your guess is as good as mine. In any case**, I'll keep you posted.

Bob: Okay. Just **give me a ring** as soon as you know.



IDIOMS – LESSON 16

at first – in the beginning

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole didn't like *Don Quixote* **at first**, but after 200 pages she started to get into it.

EXAMPLE 2: Don't get discouraged if you don't succeed **at first**. The important thing is that you keep on trying!

(to) get the hang of (something) – to learn how to do something; to acquire an effective technique

EXAMPLE 1: Billy had trouble learning how to ride a bike, but after a few months he finally **got the hang of it**.

EXAMPLE 2: When I went snowboarding for the first time, I kept falling down. But after a while, I **got the hang of it**.

(to) give (someone) a ring – to telephone someone

EXAMPLE 1: **Give me a ring** tomorrow so we can discuss plans for this weekend.

EXAMPLE 2: If you're free on Saturday, **give me a ring** and we can go to the movies.

SYNONYM: to give (someone) a buzz [slang]

in any case – whatever the fact is; certainly

EXAMPLE 1: We can either go to the new Star Wars movie or see a play tonight. **In any case**, you'll need to be at my house by six o'clock.

EXAMPLE 2: You'll probably be too tired on Sunday to come over. **In any case**, give me a call in the morning to discuss.

in person – personally; in one's physical presence

EXAMPLE 1: Tim hoped that he and Svetlana would get along as well **in person** as they did over the Internet.

EXAMPLE 2: After hearing so much about Donna's boyfriend, I'm looking forward to meeting him **in person**.

(to) keep posted – to provide up-to-date information

EXAMPLE 1: **Keep me posted** about your plans for the summer. If you're going to be at your cottage on the lake, I'd love to come visit.

EXAMPLE 2: Good luck selling your house and **keep me posted**! I'd love to know how much you get for it.

(to) learn the ropes – to learn the basics

EXAMPLE 1: Mark **learned the ropes** of the restaurant business by working as a cook at Outback Steakhouse.

EXAMPLE 2: David worked at a big law firm for 10 years where he **learned the ropes**. Now he runs his own law firm.

pain in the neck – an annoyance

EXAMPLE 1: Yesterday I had to stay home all day and wait for the repairman. What a **pain in the neck**!

EXAMPLE 2: Alice wants me to drive her to the airport early tomorrow morning. That's going to be a **pain in the neck**!

piece of cake – very easy

EXAMPLE 1: Nicole finished her physics test in just 25 minutes. It was a **piece of cake**.

EXAMPLE 2: The driving test is a **piece of cake**. Don't worry about it.

SYNONYM: easy as pie. You should have no trouble passing the driving test. It's as **easy as pie**.

(to) round up – to gather people together

EXAMPLE 1: The town **rounded up** 200 volunteers to search for the hiker, who was lost in the woods of Yosemite National Park.

EXAMPLE 2: Let's **round up** some volunteers to help bake cookies and pies for the bake sale.

second nature – a behavior that has been practiced for so long, it seems to have been there always

EXAMPLE 1: Karen has been arguing with her husband every day for the past 20 years, so by now it's just **second nature**.

EXAMPLE 2: With practice, riding a unicycle becomes **second nature**.

to tell you the truth – to speak openly; to admit

EXAMPLE 1: **To tell you the truth**, Ted isn't a very good student.

EXAMPLE 2: **To tell you the truth**, I didn't even want to attend Katie's wedding. But I knew she'd be offended if I didn't go.

your guess is as good as mine – I don't know; I don't know any more than you do

EXAMPLE 1: Will we ever find intelligent life on other planets? **Your guess is as good as mine**.

EXAMPLE 2: Will Ted graduate on time? **Your guess is as good as mine**!

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word:

- 1) When Nicole drove her car for the first time, she was really nervous. Now, after an entire year, it's ____ nature.
a) first b) second c) third
- 2) I can't believe I won. To ____ you the truth, I never thought I'd be able to beat you at tennis.
a) say b) tell c) explain
- 3) Nicole was going to mail her college application to Yale. But then she decided to go to New Haven and deliver it ____ person.
a) on b) at c) in
- 4) After a snowstorm, it can be a real pain in the ____ driving to work in the morning.
a) head b) arm c) neck
- 5) The meeting in Dallas was canceled, but, in ____ case, we still need to go there.
a) all b) any c) about
- 6) Starting a new job is difficult in the beginning. It gets easier once you learn the ____.
a) ropes b) chains c) ties
- 7) Bob and Susan thought getting rich would be very difficult. But thanks to their cookie business, it was a piece of ____.
a) cookie b) cake c) pie
- 8) Let's go to the movies tonight. I'll look in the newspaper and ____ you a ring after I see what's playing.
a) offer b) take c) give

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