Lesson 1

BOB’S DAY AT WORK

Bob works as a manager in a furniture store. Peter, his boss, is not happy about sales. Bob’s new advertising campaign hasn’t helped. Peter decides to fire him.

Bob trabaja de encargado en una tienda de muebles. Peter, su jefe, no está satisfecho con las ventas. La nueva campaña publicitaria de Bob no ha ayudado. Peter decide despedirlo.

Peter: Bob, I hate to break the news, but our sales were down again last month.

Bob: Down again, Peter?

Peter: Yeah. These days, everybody’s shopping at our competition, Honest Abe’s Furniture Store.

Bob: But everything in there costs an arm and a leg!

Peter: That’s true. They do charge top dollar.

Bob: And their salespeople are very strange. They really give me the creeps!

Peter: Well, they must be doing something right over there. Meanwhile, we’re about to go belly-up.

Bob: I’m sorry to hear that. I thought my new advertising campaign would save the day.
**Peter:** Let’s face it: your advertising campaign was a **real flop**.

**Bob:** Well then I’ll **go back to the drawing board**.

**Peter:** It’s too late for that. You’re fired!

**Bob:** What? You’re **giving me the ax**?

**Peter:** Yes. I’ve already found a new manager. She’s as **sharp as a tack**.

**Bob:** Can’t we even **talk this over**? **After all**, I’ve been working here for 10 years!

**Peter:** There’s **no point in** arguing, Bob. I’ve already **made up my mind**.

**Bob:** Oh well, **at least** I won’t have to **put up with** your nonsense anymore! Good-bye to you and good-bye to this **dead-end job**.

**Peter:** Please leave before I **lose my temper**!

### IDIOMS – LESSON 1

| **about to** | – ready to; on the verge of  
| **a punto de, listo para**  
| **EXAMPLE:** It’s a good thing Bob left the furniture store when he did. Peter was so angry, he was **about to** throw a dining room chair at him.  

| **after all** | – despite everything; when everything has been considered  
| **después de todo, a pesar de todo**  
| **EXAMPLE:** You’d better invite Ed to your party. **After all**, he’s a good friend.  

| **at least** | – anyway  
| **por lo menos**  
| **EXAMPLE:** We’ve run out of coffee, but **at least** we still have tea.  
| **NOTA:** La segunda definición de esta frase es “no menos de”: There were **at least** 300 people waiting in line to buy concert tickets.  

(to) **break the news** – to make something known  
*dar la noticia*

**Example:** Samantha and Miguel are getting married, but they haven’t yet **broken the news** to their parents.

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(to) **cost an arm and a leg** – to be very expensive  
*costar mucho, costar un ojo de la cara*

**Example:** A college education in America **costs an arm and a leg**.

**Synonyms:** to cost a small fortune; to cost a pretty penny

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**dead-end job** – a job that won’t lead to anything else  
*trabajo sin perspectivas de futuro, trabajo sin futuro*

**Example:** Diane realized that working as a cashier was a **dead-end job**.

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(let’s) **face it** – accept a difficult reality  
*aceptar algo difícil, asumirlo*

**Example:** Let’s **face it**, if Ted spent more time studying, he wouldn’t be failing so many of his classes!

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(to) **give one the creeps** – to stir in someone a feeling of disgust or horror  
*darle repugnancia*

**Example:** Ted’s friend Matt has seven earrings in each ear and an “I Love Mom” tattoo on his arm. He really **gives Nicole the creeps**.

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(to) **go back to the drawing board** – to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning  
*volver a empezar desde el principio*

**Example:** Nobody liked the architect’s plan for the house, so he had to **go back to the drawing board**.

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(to) **go belly-up** – to go bankrupt  
*quedar en bancarrota*

**Example:** Many people lost their jobs when Enron **went belly-up**.

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(to) **give someone the ax** – to fire someone  
*despedir*

**Example:** Mary used to talk to her friends on the phone all day, until one day her boss finally **gave her the ax**.

**Synonyms:** to send someone packing; to can someone; to let someone go
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(to) lose one’s temper</strong> – to become very angry</td>
<td>perder la paciencia</td>
<td>Example: Bob always loses his temper when his kids start talking on the telephone during dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYNONYMS</strong>: to hit the roof; to blow one’s top; to blow a fuse</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(to) make up one’s mind</strong> – to reach a decision</td>
<td>decidirse</td>
<td>Example: Stephanie couldn’t make up her mind whether to attend Harvard or Stanford. Finally, she chose Stanford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>no point in</strong> – no reason to; it’s not worth (doing something)</td>
<td>no hay motivo para, no vale la pena</td>
<td>Example: There’s no point in worrying about things you can’t change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(to) put up with</strong> – to endure without complaint</td>
<td>soportar, aguantar</td>
<td>Example: For many years, Barbara put up with her husband’s annoying and obnoxious behavior. Finally, she decided to leave him.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>real flop or flop</strong> – a failure</td>
<td>fiasco, fracaso</td>
<td>Example: The Broadway play closed after just 10 days – it was a real flop!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(to) save the day</strong> – to prevent a disaster</td>
<td>impedir un desastre</td>
<td>Example: The Christmas tree was on fire, but Ted threw water on it and saved the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(as) sharp as a tack</strong> – very intelligent</td>
<td>muy perspicaz, muy inteligente</td>
<td>Example: Jay scored 100% on his science test. He’s as sharp as a tack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(to) talk over</strong> – to discuss</td>
<td>discutir, hablar de</td>
<td>Example: David and I spent hours talking over the details of the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>top dollar</strong> – the highest end of a price range; a lot of money</td>
<td>mucho dinero</td>
<td>Example: Nicole paid top dollar for a pair of jeans at Banana Republic.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) I can’t believe you bought a couch at Honest Abe’s. Everything in that store costs an arm and a _______.
   a) foot   b) leg   c) hand

2) After Bob found out that his advertising campaign failed, he wanted to go back to the drawing _______.
   a) board   b) table   c) room

3) When somebody isn’t listening to you, there’s no ___ in trying to argue with them.
   a) edge   b) tip   c) point

4) José is really smart. He’s as sharp as a _______.
   a) tack   b) nail   c) screw

5) The salespeople at Honest Abe’s always look angry and never speak to anybody. No wonder they ____ Bob the creeps.
   a) take   b) give   c) allow

6) Bob got fired. He isn’t looking forward to _____ the news to his family.
   a) breaking   b) cracking   c) saying

7) Bob thought his new advertisements would bring in lots of customers and save the _______.
   a) morning   b) night   c) day

8) Fortunately, Bob no longer has to put ___ with his stupid boss at the furniture store.
   a) over   b) in   c) up

ANSWERS TO LESSON 1, p. 159
What's the matter?

I got canned today!
Lesson 2

**BOB RETURNS HOME WITH BAD NEWS**

Bob tells his wife Susan that he lost his job. Susan suggests that he start his own business.

Bob le dice a su mujer, Susan, que se ha quedado sin trabajo. Susan sugiere que ponga su propio negocio.

**Susan:** What’s the matter, dear?

**Bob:** Susan, I got canned today at work.

**Susan:** But Bob, you were Peter’s right-hand man!

**Bob:** Yes, and he stabbed me in the back.

**Susan:** Keep your chin up. Maybe he’ll change his mind and take you back.

**Bob:** When pigs fly! Once he makes up his mind, he never changes it. Besides, I told him off.

**Susan:** Look on the bright side: you won’t have to set eyes on Peter ever again.

**Bob:** Thank goodness for that!

**Susan:** Hang in there. I’m sure you won’t be out of work for long.

**Bob:** In the meantime, we’ll have to live from hand to mouth.
Susan: Don’t get too stressed out, Bob. We’ll make ends meet.

Bob: I can always get a job at McDonald’s as a last resort.

Susan: I don’t think they’re hiring right now.

Bob: If worse comes to worst, we can sell our home and move into a tent.

Susan: Let’s think big! Maybe you can start your own business.

Bob: Easier said than done!

### IDIOMS – LESSON 2

<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>(to) change one’s mind</strong> – to alter one’s opinion or decision</th>
<th>cambiar de idea</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE:</strong> Brandon wasn’t going to take a vacation this year, but then he changed his mind and went to Bora Bora for two weeks.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>easier said than done</strong> – more difficult than you think</th>
<th>más difícil de lo que parece, del dicho al hecho hay un gran trecho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE:</strong> Moving into a new home is easier said than done.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(to) get canned</strong> [slang] – to lose one’s job; to get fired</th>
<th>ser despedido</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE:</strong> After Chris got canned, it took him a year to find a new job. <strong>SYNONYMS:</strong> to get sacked; to be given the ax</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(to) hang in there</strong> – to persevere; to not give up</th>
<th>aguantar un poco más</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE:</strong> I know you’re four games behind, but you can still win the tennis match. Just hang in there!</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>if worse comes to worst</strong> – in the worst case</th>
<th>en el peor de los casos</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **EXAMPLE:** Ted’s car isn’t running well. If worse comes to worst, he can take the bus to school. **NOTA:** Existe la variación “if worst comes to worst”.


(to) keep one’s chin up – to stay positive  
*no desanimarse*

**Example:** Even when he was unemployed and homeless, Bill managed to keep his chin up.

**last resort** – the only alternative left; the last solution for getting out of a difficulty  
*último recurso*

**Example:** David was locked out of his house. He knew that as a last resort, he could always break a window.

(to) live from hand to mouth – to barely have enough money to survive  
*vivir al día, tener lo justo para vivir*

**Example:** Jenny was earning $5 an hour at McDonald’s. She was really living from hand to mouth.

(to) look on the bright side – to be optimistic; to think about the positive part  
*ser optimista, ver el lado bueno de las cosas*

**Example:** Dan was upset that his soccer game was canceled. His mother said, “Look on the bright side, now you can stay home and watch TV.”

(to) make ends meet – to manage one’s money so as to have enough to live on  
*pasar con lo que se tiene, tener suficiente dinero para vivir*

**Example:** Kathy wasn’t able to make ends meet so she had to ask her parents to pay her rent.

(to) make up one’s mind – *Vea el capítulo 1*

**out of work** – unemployed; not working  
*desempleado*

**Example:** Gary was out of work for six months before finding a new job.

**right-hand man** – the most helpful assistant or employee  
*el empleado más importante, la mano derecha*

**Example:** Juan’s right-hand man helps him make all his decisions.

**Nota:** También existe la expresión “right-hand woman” para referirse a una mujer, pero “right-hand man” es más común.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(to) set eyes on – to look at</td>
<td>echar la vista encima</td>
<td>Ted was in love from the moment he set eyes on Amber.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to) stab someone in the back – to betray someone</td>
<td>traicionar</td>
<td>Jill and Heather were friends, until Heather stabbed Jill in the back by stealing her boyfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(to be) stressed out – under severe strain; very anxious</td>
<td>estresado, tenso</td>
<td>Joe is so stressed out about his job that he can’t sleep at night.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(to) tell off – to scold; to tell someone in strong words what one really thinks</td>
<td>regañar</td>
<td>When Ted showed up for chemistry class a half an hour late, his teacher really told him off.</td>
<td>to give someone a piece of one’s mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thank goodness – I’m grateful; I’m relieved</td>
<td>gracias a Dios</td>
<td>When Ted came home at 4 a.m. last Sunday, his mother said, “Thank goodness you’re home! I was so worried about you.”</td>
<td>thank God; thank heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to) think big – to set high goals</td>
<td>crearse objetivos ambiciosos</td>
<td>Why run for Governor of New York? Think big: run for President of the United States!</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the matter? – What’s the problem?</td>
<td>¿qué pasa?</td>
<td>What’s the matter, Bob? You don’t look very happy.</td>
<td>What’s wrong?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when pigs fly [slang] – never</td>
<td>nunca</td>
<td>Will Ted teach Nicole how to play the guitar? When pigs fly!</td>
<td>when hell freezes over; never in a million years</td>
</tr>
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</table>
 века "Practice the Idioms"

*Fill in the blank with the missing word:*

1) What’s the ______? You look upset.
   a) situation   b) issue   c) matter

2) I know I can trust you. You would never stab me in the ______.
   a) leg   b) back   c) arm

3) If Bob and Susan run out of money, they can always borrow money from Susan’s sister as a ____ resort.
   a) final   b) first   c) last

4) You look really stressed _____. Why don’t you sit down, relax, and have a cup of tea?
   a) about   b) in   c) out

5) Bob, everything will be fine. You just need to keep your chin ___ and remember that tomorrow is another day.
   a) up   b) down   c) above

6) I just can’t make up my ____ whether to order chicken or fish.
   a) head   b) brain   c) mind

7) Nicole accidentally stepped on Ted’s guitar. Ted got really angry and told her _____.
   a) off   b) out   c) away

8) Your husband left you for his psychologist? Hang ___ there! I’m sure he’ll realize she’s crazy and then come back to you.
   a) up   b) in   c) out

*Answers to Lesson 2, p. 159*