

7. IDIOMS ARE NO PIECE OF CAKE TO LEARN

- Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks
- Vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs

1. The word “**baffling**” means (more than one answer may be correct):
a) cute b) puzzling c) strange d) unfathomable e) annoying f) atrocious g) weird
2. The word “**bucket**” can be used as a verb or a noun and means (more than one answer may be correct):
a) fence b) container c) suede d) rain heavily e) hack
3. What do the following idiomatic expressions have in common? (**same meaning: die**)
a) give up the ghost b) pop your clogs c) on one's last legs d) be brown bread e) meet your maker
4. What do the following idiomatic expressions have in common? (**same meaning: be angry / mad**)
a) jump down one's throat b) hit the roof c) blow one's top d) go ballistic e) lose it
f) fly off the handle g) go berserk h) go bananas i) go ape

- Choose the correct word to be used in the idiomatic expressions below

1. I want a qualified plumber, not just any _____. (*anyone or everyone - ordinary people in general*).
a) man in the street b) Joe Blow c) Joneses d) **Tom, Dick, or Harry**
2. The bridegroom got _____ on the day of the wedding. (*A loss or lack of courage or confidence.*)
a) cold hands b) cold mind c) cool head d) **cold feet**
3. I wish I'd got to bed earlier last night - I feel like death _____. (*very ill indeed*)
a) cooled down b) frozen up c) overheated d) **warmed up**
4. Actually, you don't have a _____. You have a beer belly! (*a well-muscled abdomen*)
a) six-pack b) turtle /tə:t(ə)l/(water) c) tortoise /'tɔ:təs/(land) d) toned pack
5. When push comes to _____, you know I'll be on your side. (*When matters must be confronted*)
a) fall b) hit c) **shove** d) show

- Find the correct phrasal verb which matches each pair of sentences

get down – take on – tuck in – go off – clear up – take up – put off – make up – fall out – make up for

1. I like the taste of Gorgonzola cheese, but the smell ____ = repel or repulse - cause to lose interest
- The group's drummer is ill, so they have had to **put off** their rehearsal until next Friday. = delay; postpone
2. Put the milk in the refrigerator or it will ____ = become spoiled or rancid, stale or rotten
- I used to like horror movies, but I've **gone off** them lately = stop consuming or liking
3. Jill opened her purse, turned it upside down and all her money **fell out** = drop or tumble out of something.
- Jane and Ann are really good friends, but they have **fallen out** and are not speaking to each other = quarrel
4. Is it true that your mother is an astronaut, or did you just **make that up**? = invent
- 'Don't let the sun set on your anger,' they say. So let's kiss and **make up!** = resolve a quarrel
- We drove as fast as we could, trying to **make up for** lost time = compensate for.
5. Every night, Dad tells the children a story, **tucks them in** and kisses them goodnight. = put to bed - make comfortable
- The food looked so delicious that we all started to **tuck in** without being asked. = to eat heartily
6. It's raining quite heavily, but I hope it will **clear up** later in time for the barbecue = become sunny,
- After a party, I was left to **clear up** all the mess! = tidy up

Idioms are no piece of cake to learn. - Idioms and phrasal verbs

British people often talk too fast **for others to follow**, and use jokes, slang, idioms and references specific to their own culture, they use baffling abbreviations such as '**OOO**', instead of simply saying **that they will be "out of the office"**. An idiom involves a number of words whose meaning **can't be predicted** from simply adding together the meanings of the individual elements themselves. For example, '**she kicked the bucket**', **means 'she died'** – you just have to know the meaning **of the whole unit**. Other examples include '**She jumped down my throat**', or '**He hit the roof**'. The literal meaning is not **what's actually meant**. All languages have idioms, but the range, variety and unpredictability of English idioms is difficult for foreign language learners **to acquire**.

There are other aspects of English that are extremely complex: consider phrasal verbs — verbs followed by prepositions, where a change in preposition changes the meaning. Learners **have every right** to feel *put out* when they *put someone up* for the night, only to discover that they *can't put up with* them. They may want to *put off* learning English **for another time**.

VOCABULARY

Unfathomable /ʌn'fað(ə)məb(ə)/ = incapable of being fully explored or understood, incomprehensible, enigmatic
Suede /swiːd/ = leather with the flesh side rubbed to make a velvety nap.

Joe Blow /dʒəʊ 'bləʊ/ = a name for a hypothetical average man.

Joneses /'dʒəʊnzɪz/ = a person's neighbours or social equals.

put out inconvenience: *Did our early arrival put you out?* extinguish: *put out a fire.*

offend or irritate: *I was put out by his attention to the television set.*

put up = provide lodgings for: put a friend up for the night.

put up with = endure without complaint: We had to put up with the inconvenience.

put off = delay; postpone: put off paying the bills.