

Lesson 1

Gourmet International Gets New Competition

Mark, Ron, and Steve work at Gourmet International, a small food company specializing in ethnic frozen foods. Mark, a marketing manager at the company, tells his boss Ron and his co-worker Steve that Grand Foods, a large food company, is going to start competing with them in the frozen Chinese meals market. Mark got this information from an ex-girlfriend. Ron tells Mark to call her back and see if she can give more details.

Mark: I just found out that Grand Foods is planning to **come out with** a *line** of *gourmet** frozen Chinese meals.

Ron: It was **only a matter of time before** a big company decided to **enter the market**.

Mark: That's true. We've been **making money hand over fist** with our frozen Chinese meals for the past two years!

Steve: They're going to **eat our lunch!**

Mark: Our dinner, too.

Ron: Let's not **push the panic button** yet. Mark, how did you get this information?

Mark: **I have my sources.**

Ron: **Out with it!** Who told you?

Mark: An ex-girlfriend. She's the **head honcho** at Shop-Well.

More Speak English Like an American
copyrighted material - sample page

Ron: Call her back and see what else she can tell us. We need to get this information **by hook or by crook**.

Mark: She's my *ex*.* It's very awkward!

Ron: Sometimes you have to **leave your comfort zone**.

Mark: I'll call her tomorrow, but **this is not in my job description**.

Ron: Don't worry about your job description. If you **drag your feet** on this, you're not even going to have a job! Call her back right now.

* Words in italics are defined in the Glossary on pages 159-160.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS - LESSON 1
<p>(to) come out with – to release (as in a product or service)</p> <p>▶ Levi's has come out with a new line of "eco jeans" made from organic cotton.</p>
<p>(to be) only a matter of time before – to be sure to happen</p> <p>▶ The stoplight at the intersection is broken. It's only a matter of time before there's an accident.</p> <p>NOTE: You will sometimes see this expression as "it's just a matter of time before." Also, you may hear the variation "it's only a matter of time until."</p>
<p>(to) enter the market – to start competing; to become a competitor</p> <p>▶ Apple entered the market for cell phones in 2007 with the the iPhone.</p>
<p>(to) make money hand over fist – to make a lot of money, often quickly or easily</p> <p>▶ Mike is making money hand over fist by buying old apartment buildings, renovating them, and then renting them out.</p>

More Speak English Like an American
copyrighted material - sample page

<p>(to) eat one's lunch – to take away one's business</p> <p>▶ Our competitor's new cell phone offers more features than ours at a cheaper price. If we don't act quickly, they're going to eat our lunch.</p>
<p>(to) push the panic button – to panic suddenly; to overreact</p> <p>▶ Our soccer team has lost four games in a row, but we're not ready to push the panic button yet.</p>
<p>I have my sources – I know people who have information (say this when you don't want to say who gave you some information)</p> <p>▶ “Who told you that Jack is planning to leave the company?” — “I have my sources.”</p>
<p>Out with it – Tell me; Don't hold back the information</p> <p>▶ The teacher said, “Out with it! Who drew this picture of me on the blackboard?”</p>
<p>head honcho – an important person; the boss or somebody in a senior position</p> <p>▶ When Jeff Immelt became the head honcho of General Electric, he made some strategic changes at the company.</p> <p>SYNONYMS: big cheese; bigwig; big wheel; big gun; top dog</p>
<p>by hook or by crook – in any way possible, fair or unfair</p> <p>▶ Roy was going to get the client to sign the contract by hook or by crook.</p>
<p>(to) leave (or get out of) one's comfort zone – to do something that makes one feel uncomfortable in order to achieve a certain goal</p> <p>▶ Larry doesn't like speaking in front of large groups, so he'll have to leave his comfort zone to make a speech at his daughter's wedding.</p>

This is not in my job description – an expression used to point out that what you're being asked to do is beyond your usual responsibilities (and you are not very happy about it)

▶ I can't believe I'm cleaning everybody's old food out of the office refrigerator. **This is not in my job description!**

(to) drag one's feet – to delay doing something

▶ You'd better stop **dragging your feet** and start working on your college applications. Otherwise, you're not going to get them in on time.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

- 1) Drive the president to the airport at 6 a.m. tomorrow? **This is not in my job description!**
 - a) I'll do it gladly.
 - b) That's beyond my usual responsibility.
 - c) That's just part of my job.
- 2) Who's the **head honcho** of the marketing department?
 - a) head assistant
 - b) manager
 - c) person in charge
- 3) Please **don't drag your feet** in getting me the sales reports.
 - a) take your time
 - b) don't rush
 - c) don't delay
- 4) Adam's company is **making money hand over fist** by offering low-cost video games online.
 - a) losing a lot of money
 - b) making a lot of money
 - c) making a little money

More Speak English Like an American
copyrighted material - sample page

- 5) The police know who the robber is. **It's only a matter of time before the police find him.**
- a) The police need to find out who he is.
 - b) The police will definitely find him.
 - c) The police may be able to find him.
- 6) The president was determined to stay in power **by hook or by crook.**
- a) by any means possible
 - b) by stealing the election
 - c) by following the rules
- 7) Starting your own business usually requires you to **leave your comfort zone.**
- a) find a place where you feel safest
 - b) be uncomfortable for a long time
 - c) leave your feeling of safety and take a risk
- 8) Many small newspapers say that the website Craigslist.org is **eating their lunch** by offering free classified advertisements.
- a) hurting their business
 - b) helping their business
 - c) giving people a good deal
- 9) Our best salesperson just announced he's leaving the company, but **let's not push the panic button yet.**
- a) let's keep calm and come up with a plan
 - b) let's panic in a few days
 - c) let's not worry about it at all
- 10) Who was sitting in my office while I was on vacation? **Out with it!**
- a) Get out!
 - b) Tell me!
 - c) Go back in!



I don't want to open a can of worms!

Lesson 2

Mark Discusses His Regrets

Mark regrets telling Ron that his ex-girlfriend Cindy was the source of his information. He doesn't want to call Cindy back because he's afraid she'll think he wants to date her again. Steve tells him he'll need to call her anyway.

Steve: What's wrong?

Mark: I'm **kicking myself** for telling Ron about my ex-girlfriend. He's **on my case**. He wants me to call her for more information.

Steve: **What's the big deal?**

Mark: She's **off her rocker**, and I think she still **has the hots for** me. I don't want to **open a can of worms!**

Steve: So she's **got a few screws loose!** It couldn't be that bad.

Mark: It is. She's a **control freak**, too.

Steve: If I were you, I'd just call her. **Suck it up!**

Mark: I'm afraid it's a **recipe for disaster**. If I call her, she may think I want to **get back together**.

Steve: Well, Ron is not going to **let you off the hook**. He wants more information.

Mark: I'm in a **no-win situation**. If I don't call her, Ron will keep **breathing down my neck**. If I do call her, I'll have to talk to her!

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS - LESSON 2
<p>(to) kick oneself – to regret something</p> <p>▶ Sue is kicking herself for quitting her job before finding a new one. Now she’s got no money and can’t get any interviews.</p>
<p>on someone’s case – bothering or nagging somebody to do something</p> <p>▶ Ted complained that his mother was always on his case about doing his homework.</p>
<p>What’s the big deal? – What’s the problem? What are you worried about?</p> <p>▶ “So Diane’s decided to leave the company. What’s the big deal?” — “She’s one of our top employees!”</p>
<p>off one’s rocker – crazy</p> <p>▶ When Britney Spears shaved her head, some people thought she was off her rocker.</p>
<p>(to) have the hots for someone – to have romantic feelings for someone</p> <p>▶ Gary has the hots for you. Didn’t you see how he was staring at you during the meeting?</p>
<p>(to) open a can of worms – to do something that will lead to problems later</p> <p>▶ We’d like to let you work from home, but it would just open a can of worms. Everybody would want to work from home.</p>
<p>(to) have a few screws loose – to be crazy</p> <p>▶ Nick met a woman on the Internet, and she showed up in a wedding dress on their first date! He realized she must have a few screws loose.</p> <p>SYNONYM: to be not quite all there</p>

More Speak English Like an American
copyrighted material - sample page

control freak – a person who wants to control everything

▶ “You moved the chairs around in the conference room without asking me first?” — “Yes, I did. I didn’t realize you were such a **control freak!**”

(to) suck it up – to deal with something unpleasant; to endure something without complaining

▶ I know you don’t like your roommate, but the school year is almost over. **Suck it up** for another couple of months.

recipe for disaster – something which is likely to cause trouble; a bad idea or plan

▶ Emily put the time and place of her next party on Facebook.com for everybody to see? That’s a **recipe for disaster!**

(to) get back together – to restart a romantic relationship

▶ Ken and Nancy got divorced two years ago, but lately they’ve been talking about **getting back together**.

(to) let someone off the hook – to free someone from a duty or obligation; to forgive someone for not doing a duty

▶ You’re too busy to walk the dog today? Okay, I’ll do it today, but I’m not **letting you off the hook** for tomorrow.

no-win situation – a situation where all options are unpleasant

▶ I’m in a **no-win situation**. If I promote Rachel, then Bill will be angry. If I promote Bill, then Rachel will leave the company.

(to) breathe down someone’s neck – to watch over someone very closely in a way that makes them uncomfortable or pressures them to do something

▶ I promised my boss I’d finish the report by Friday. Hopefully, he won’t be **breathing down my neck** all week.

 **PRACTICE THE IDIOMS**

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

- 1) Nina is starting to think that her new boss has a few screws loose.
 - a) Why doesn't she like him?
 - b) Why doesn't she offer to tighten the screws?
 - c) What did her boss do to make her think that?

- 2) Jim has the hots for Andrea.
 - a) Then he'll probably ask her out.
 - b) Then he should wait until he cools off.
 - c) Then he should stop seeing her.

- 3) I told Karen that I was too tired to help prepare for the party, so she let me off the hook.
 - a) That's too bad.
 - b) That was nice of her.
 - c) Maybe she'll put you back on the hook later.

- 4) I'm kicking myself for investing in Carl's company.
 - a) How much money have you lost?
 - b) How much money have you made?
 - c) How much has Carl kicked in?

- 5) I hope my boss stops breathing down my neck.
 - a) You should tell him you need a lot of close attention.
 - b) You should tell him your neck is getting too warm.
 - c) You should tell him you work best when you're left alone.

- 6) Is it true that Jessica is a control freak?
 - a) Yes, she has no control over anything.
 - b) Yes, she doesn't trust her employees to do anything on their own.
 - c) Yes, she really does behave like a freak.

More Speak English Like an American
copyrighted material - sample page

- 7) Don't repeat any gossip you hear at work. It's a recipe for disaster.
- a) That's good advice.
 - b) You're right. It's a great idea.
 - c) I agree. It is a good recipe.
- 8) Kevin's next door neighbor is always on his case about turning down his music.
- a) The neighbor must enjoy listening to it.
 - b) Kevin should turn the music up.
 - c) Kevin must play it very loudly.
- 9) I know you're not happy about having to go on a six-week business trip to Malaysia, but just suck it up.
- a) Okay, I'll tell my company I can't go.
 - b) You're right. I am looking forward to it.
 - c) You're right. The time will go by quickly.
- 10) I think we've opened a can of worms by asking our employees to be more open with the management.
- a) I agree. We're getting very valuable comments.
 - b) I agree. Now they're all complaining about their bosses!
 - c) I agree. We should close the can as soon as possible.

ANSWERS TO LESSON 2, p. 161