



Library, Room L204
English, Writing & ESL

The Learning Centre

Speaking Skills

Idiom Usage Practice (KEY)

1. I better **hit the books** soon; I have a Sociology test on Monday.

Intended Meaning: I better start studying soon; I have a Sociology test on Monday.

2. I was feeling pretty **down in the dumps** yesterday, but my mom told me to **keep my chin up**.

Intended Meaning: I was feeling pretty gloomy/depressed yesterday, but my mom told me to stay positive.

3. Raine was extremely disruptive in class today. However, Mrs. Lee only gave him a **slap on the wrist**, as usual. She's always been so passive.

Intended Meaning: However, Mrs. Lee only gave him a small punishment, as usual.

4. I want to buy a new car, but I'm scared that I might **buy a lemon**. Does anyone have any suggestions for reliable car brands?

Intended Meaning: I want to buy a new car, but I'm scared that I might buy one that has a lot of problems.

5. Want to go to Starbucks and grab a **cup of Joe**?

Intended Meaning: Want to go to Starbucks and grab a cup of coffee?

6. My granddaughter came to visit me today. That's something that only happens **once in a blue moon**.

Intended Meaning: That's something that happens rarely.

7. I have been having an extraordinary day. First, I got called for a job interview in the morning and received an "A" on my paper in the afternoon. The **icing on the cake** was when I got engaged to my boyfriend at dinner.

Intended Meaning: The thing that turned my day from good to even better was when I got engaged to my boyfriend at dinner.

8. “I don’t trust Kianna,” said Joanie. “She’s been a **loose cannon** lately.”

Intended Meaning: “She’s been unpredictable/potentially dangerous lately.”

9. There were Kitchen Aid mixers on sale at Canadian Tire, but the store didn’t have any in stock. Therefore, they gave me a **raincheck**.

Intended Meaning: Therefore, they agreed to give me the sale price at a later date.

10. Don wanted to work hard to get a raise in his job; however, he was **running out of steam**.

Intended Meaning: Don wanted to work hard to get a raise in his job; however, he was running out of energy/getting tired.