

Idioms: practice exercises

Match the formal expressions with their colloquial equivalents:

1

Let us remain optimistic.

That is the ideal solution.

Perform a task successfully.

I am grateful for your contribution.

Unfortunately I'm not available on Tuesday. Is Wednesday possible?

Sorry, I can't make it on Tuesday. Is Wednesday any good?

Do a good job.

Thanks for your input.

That'll be just the ticket.

Let's look on the bright side.

2

The penny's dropped!

What are you getting at?

She was hard to follow.

I did not understand her presentation.

Between us we failed to communicate!

Ah! I understand it now!

Do you understand me?

I infer from what you write/are saying.

Let me make it very clear for you.

What is the point you are trying to make?

I am in agreement with that.

I did not understand what he was saying.

I'll go along with that.

What was he on about?

I'll spell it out for you.

We got our wires crossed.

Reading between the lines ...

Do you get my drift?

3

Match the formal expressions with their more colloquial equivalents:

Sorry!

It's good to have a chat.

This is an outstanding piece of work.

The presentation went down well.

He's failing to deliver.

We much appreciate your hospitality.

Thanks so much -
we had a really good time.

Incapacitated by alcohol.

A chaotic situation.

I will contact you.

I welcome this opportunity for a discussion.

He's not up
to the job.

I do apologise!

You've done a
really good job.

I failed to hear what you said.

The presentation was well received.

Sorry?

Completely plastered.

I'll be in touch.

A right mess.

4

I must have
a word with you.

I'm in two
minds.

I made the wrong inferences from what you were saying.

I understand what you are saying.

This is my
bottom line.

I did not hear what you just said..

This is confidential to the two of us

I got the wrong
end of the stick.

We need to have a discussion.

I cannot make any further concessions.

No one is fooling you.

No one is
having you on.

I am undecided.

I get the picture.

Sorry I didn't quite catch that.

Between
you and me.

5

Pair a speech bubble with a word on the left:

intend	Look, have a word with the manager and see what he says.	Someone needs to sort this out very soon!
supervise		
discuss	Please keep an eye on the children this afternoon.	Let's not let this little disagreement get in the way of what we're trying to do here.
resolve		
impede	The trouble is, she's always getting the wrong end of the stick .	What do you have in mind ?
misunderstand		

expensive	The car doesn't work very well. It's very old and on its last legs .	He hasn't been Sales Manager here long and frankly I'm not sure he's up to it .
capable		
very suitable	No, really, a tent is just the job!	I don't have full details but I can give you some figures off the top of my head .
approximate		
almost collapsed	The new car must have cost a bob or two .	Is she interested in the new position? Do you think she's up for it ?
motivated		

deteriorate	It's time for someone to stand up and be counted .	His jokes just wind me up .
contemplate		
irritate	I'm beginning to get the hang of how this works!	I can lend a hand with practical things, but I'm not much good at computers.
assist		
take responsibility	Once she started working at Bluebells their relationship started to go downhill .	You need to sleep on this. Don't make a hasty decision.
understand		

over the hill	You mustn't drive. You've had too much to drink	She was so happy!
over the moon		
over the top	He's probably a little too old to run the marathon.	I thought his behaviour at the party was too wild .
over the limit		

6

Pair the sentence on the left with the more colloquial expression on the right.

Can I be of assistance? I'm sorry to say

He failed to comprehend the issue Can I lend a hand?

I am in favour of this I can't wait to catch up

I am very grateful I just can't get a handle on it

I completely and unreservedly apologise I'm all for it

I look forward to seeing you again soon I'm really sorry

I regret to inform you it fits the bill

I'm going to have to ask you to leave Thanks very much

It meets our requirements They're not singing off the same hymn sheet

It was a very enjoyable experience This should be just the job

They have insufficient synergy We had a really good time

This project is proving extremely difficult We need to make the most of what we have

This should be highly suitable We need to sit down and sort this out

We need a meeting to resolve these issues You'll have to think on your feet

We must optimize our existing resources He got the wrong end of the stick

You will need to improvise On your bike