

Idioms | Lesson 16

back and forth | once in a blue moon | a penny for your thoughts | bite off more than one can chew | off the hook

Example Dialogue

Eddie : The teacher always punishes you for talking in class. Does he ever let you off the hook?

Daniel : Once in a blue moon.


Veronica : A penny for your thoughts.

Jeremy : I was looking at this pigeon in the park, that's all.

Sarah : Can I help you? You've been running back and forth the whole day.

Miranda: I'm very busy with schoolwork. Also, I promised a friend to help her with Chemistry.

Sarah : I'm always telling you: you bite off more than you can chew!

 **Try to figure out the meaning of these idioms.**

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Example Passage

Timothy is not a very sociable person. He doesn't dislike people, but he doesn't make an effort to talk to anyone, either. **Once in a blue moon**, he goes to a social event such as a book signing session. Otherwise, he is perfectly happy with reading by himself in the park. One day, something broke the balance of Timothy's peaceful life. An elderly man sat down next to Timothy and said: "**A penny for your thoughts.**"

Timothy had no idea how to react. "Well, I'm reading a book... I'm not thinking much." The man then replied: "Well you should be thinking about what the author wanted to tell you. Don't you agree?" Timothy was furious and thought to himself: "Who is this man? I won't let him **off the hook.**" Timothy was ready to quarrel with the old man, but while he was not paying attention, the man left.

Afterwards, young Timothy went back home. He was walking **back and forth** in his apartment. He couldn't calm down. "That old man **bit off more than he could chew!**" he thought. After a while, Timothy sat down and started analyzing the man's words and realized that he was right. He should pay more attention to the books he reads.

 **Again, try to figure out the meaning of these idioms.**

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Definitions

back and forth | moving first in one direction and then in the opposite one

*I'm so nervous! I've been walking **back and forth** in the room for at least half an hour.*

once in a blue moon | very rarely

*He visits his grandparents **once in a blue moon**.*

*She comes by **once in a blue moon**.*

a penny for your thoughts | something you ask another person when you want to know his thoughts

*A: "**A penny for your thoughts**." B: "I was just thinking about her again."*

bite off more than one can chew | to try to do more than one can do

*You should have just asked for help! You always **bite off more than you can chew**.*

*We **bit off more than we could chew** when we started repairing the TV.*

off the hook | no longer in difficulty or trouble

*I'm **off the hook**! Jean agreed to be the class representative in my stead.*

*You're **off the hook**. Go outside and play, but be back by sundown.*

Make sure you can understand the meaning of these idioms.

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 Practice

Fill in the blanks with the correct **idioms** (in the correct form) to complete the dialogue.

- 1 | Christine was silent, so I asked her: " _____."
- 2 | You certainly _____. How do you expect to finish all that work in time?
- 3 | The children were running _____ on the playground.
- 4 | Norman was late for class again, but the teacher let him _____.
- 5 | I'm thinking of getting rid of this food processor. I use it _____!
- 6 | The gym teacher made the pupils run _____ 5 times this lesson.
- 7 | I hate it when strangers say: " _____." I never know how to answer.
- 8 | My grandma makes her famous pie _____. I wish I could have some right now.
- 9 | Richard _____. I think he was just aiming for a promotion.
- 10 | I'll let you _____ this time! But never make such mistakes again!

 **APPLICATION:** Create your own sentences using these idioms.

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 Exercise

Fill in the blanks with the correct **idioms** (in the correct form) to complete the dialogue.

(Helen is telling her friend about an incident involving her neighbor, Mr. Ward)

Nat : _____.

Helen : Oh. I was just thinking about our neighbor Mr. Ward.

Nat : What about him?

Helen : I was playing baseball yesterday with my younger brother... And we broke a window in his house. He'll definitely not let us _____.

Nat : No way! (*chuckle*) I thought you don't play sports!

Helen : _____, I do.

Nat : Did you apologize?

Helen : Of course! I _____ when I thought I could make amends.

Nat : Don't worry, you'll figure something out. He won't call the police, will he?

Helen : I hope not! I've been walking _____ from my house to his, trying to convince him to accept an apology and refund.

Nat : He hasn't called yet, so you still have time!



APPLICATION: Create your own dialogue using these idioms.

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