



Exercise 1

■ Give the idioms for each of the following definitions.

Q1. The attitude of a person or organisation towards something.

.....

Q2. To be unbelievable.

.....

Q3. To make someone seem a much worse person than in fact they are.

.....

Q4. To refer to something indirectly, to touch on something.

.....

Q5. To mix up, confuse things.

.....

Q6. Deeply observant.

.....

Q7. Very tired from exhaustion or lack of sleep.

.....

Q8. Person with attention to tiny detail/who cannot tolerate mistakes.

.....

Q9. To come off the worst, to be hurt/damaged more than anything/anyone else.

.....

Q10. It's too early to form an opinion.

.....



Exercise 2

■ Give a definition for each of the following idioms.

Q1. To Ruffle Someone's Feathers.

.....

Q2. Level-Headed.

.....

Q3. To Undercut.

.....

Q4. To Find Wanting.

.....

Q5. To Play It By Ear.

.....

Q6. To Mull Over.

.....

Q7. To Fend For.

.....

Q8. Bereft.

.....

Q9. Credit Where Credit's Due.

.....

Q10. To Take Someone To Task.

.....



Exercise 3

■ Write a sentence with each of the following idioms.

Q1. Entrenched.

Q2. Watershed.

Q3. Shrinking Violet.

Q4. To Unravel.

Q5. To Flick/Flip Through.

Q6. Uncanny.

Q7. To Get Short Shrift From Someone.

Q8. To Pander To.

Q9. To Gloat.

Q10. To Fall From/Out Of Grace.



Exercise 4

- Re-write the following sentences using an appropriate word or phrase from Stage 19 with the same meaning.

E.g. Despite all their best efforts, things did not really **(turn out)** well for John and Maria when they moved to Germany. Despite all their best efforts, things did not really **pan out** well for John and Maria when they moved to Germany.

Q1. Charles bears an **(unusual and inexplicable)** resemblance to his great-grandfather Edward; looking at old black-and-white photos of Edward in his youth, the two of them could be taken for twins.

Q2. I reckon the football team could easily have won if they hadn't been so **(lacking in enthusiasm/not fully committed)** in the first part of the match.

Q3. The possibility of an economic recession **(is playing a major part)** in everyone's minds at the moment.

Q4. When the boss forced everyone in the department, including himself, to work unnecessary unpaid overtime, he was **(doing something with the intention of harming another person, but which ends in harming oneself even more)**
.....

Q5. When the police started investigating the accusations of political corruption, they soon discovered that the initial allegations were just **(one small problem which cannot be seen amongst many much bigger ones that cannot)**
.....

Q6. Bronwen gets angry with her team so often that it's really not worth **(getting annoyed and anxious about)** it.

Q7. When I read the first draft of Edgar's novel, it was **(filled with)** spelling and grammatical mistakes but it was still the most entertaining work I'd read in a long time.

Q8. My grandfather's **(principle based on experience rather than theory)**
..... to neither borrow nor lend money if you can possibly avoid it stood him in good stead in his many years as a successful businessman.

Q9. After Daniel lost his job, he tried **(to act as if he was coping with the situation)**
..... but it was clear to his friends and family that he was struggling.

Q10. Although Nicola is always **(making negative comments about)**
..... Charles, personally I think it's because she secretly fancies him, at least a little bit and doesn't want him to know.



Answers

Exercise 1

- Give the idioms for each of the following definitions.

A1. The attitude of a person or organisation towards something.

Stance.

A2. To be unbelievable.

To beggar belief.

A3. To make someone seem a much worse person than in fact they are.

To demonize.

A4. To refer to something indirectly, to touch on something.

To allude to.

A5. To mix up, confuse things.

To muddle up.

A6. Deeply observant.

Insightful.

A7. Very tired from exhaustion or lack of sleep.

Bleary-eyed.

A8. Person with attention to tiny detail/who cannot tolerate mistakes.

Stickler.

A9. To come off the worst, to be hurt/damaged more than anything/anyone else.

To bear the brunt of.

A10. It's too early to form an opinion.

The jury is still out.



Exercise 2

- Give a definition for each of the following idioms.

A1. To Ruffle Someone's Feathers.

To annoy/upset.

A2. Level-Headed.

Having common sense, sensible.

A3. To Undercut.

To offer goods/services at a lower price than a competitor.

A4. To Find Wanting.

To judge something to be below the required standard.

A5. To Play It By Ear.

To improvise.

A6. To Mull Over.

To think about, consider.

A7. To Fend For.

To provide for.

A8. Bereft.

Lacking or deprived.

A9. Credit Where Credit's Due.

The person who deserves it should be acknowledged.

A10. To Take Someone To Task.

To blame, call to account.



Exercise 3

■ Write a sentence with each of the following idioms.

- A1. Entrenched. **Although curry is now firmly entrenched in British culture, the situation was very different only a relatively few years ago.**
- A2. Watershed. **The Stonewall riots of the late 1960s were a watershed moment in the history of gay rights in the United States.**
- A3. Shrinking Violet. **Although I would never have called her a shrinking violet exactly, Diane has clearly grown in confidence a lot since she has been working in the company.**
- A4. To Unravel. **It took the police over a year to gradually unravel the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the mayor's daughter.**
- A5. To Flick/Flip Through. **John was flipping/flicking through a magazine at the dentist's when he suddenly saw a photo of a guy he had been to school with.**
- A6. Uncanny. **Bill's performance in the play was so believable that it was almost uncanny.**
- A7. To Get Short Shift From Someone. **The Socialist Party spent ages outlining their reasons for opposing the government's policy, but in the end the Liberal Prime Minister gave them short shift.**
- A8. To Pander To. **The new show Zombie Buffet has been a success, but nonetheless, fans of the books it is based on have accused the producers of pandering too much to the teenage audience.**
- A9. To Gloat. **In a lot of stories, if the villain didn't stop to gloat at the hero or heroine rather than killing them, he or she would usually win.**
- A10. To Fall From/Out Of Grace. **Although fifteen years ago, the 'indie darling' actor Tommy Metcalf could seemingly do no wrong, he has since fallen from grace/fallen out of grace.**



Answers

Exercise 4

- Re-write the following sentences using an appropriate word or phrase from Stage 19 with the same meaning.

E.g. Despite all their best efforts, things did not really **(turn out)** well for John and Maria when they moved to Germany. Despite all their best efforts, things did not really **pan out** well for John and Maria when they moved to Germany.

- A1.** Charles bears an **(unusual and inexplicable) uncanny** resemblance to his great-grandfather Edward; looking at old black-and-white photos of Edward in his youth, the two of them could be taken for twins.
- A2.** I reckon the football team could easily have won if they hadn't been so **(lacking in enthusiasm/not fully committed) half-hearted** in the first part of the match.
- A3.** The possibility of an economic recession **(is playing a major part) is looming large** in everyone's minds at the moment.
- A4.** When the boss forced everyone in the department, including himself, to work unnecessary unpaid overtime, he was **(doing something with the intention of harming another person, but which ends in harming oneself even more) cutting off his nose to spite his face**.
- A5.** When the police started investigating the accusations of political corruption, they soon discovered that the initial allegations were just **(one small problem which cannot be seen amongst many much bigger ones that cannot) the tip of the iceberg**.
- A6.** Bronwen gets angry with her team so often that it's really not worth **(getting annoyed and anxious about) getting worked up about/over** it.
- A7.** When I read the first draft of Edgar's novel, it was **(filled with) littered with** spelling and grammatical mistakes but it was still the most entertaining work I'd read in a long time.
- A8.** My grandfather's **(principle based on experience rather than theory) rule of thumb** to neither borrow nor lend money if you can possibly avoid it stood him in good stead in his many years as a successful businessman.
- A9.** After Daniel lost his job, he tried **(to act as if he was coping with the situation) to put on a brave face** but it was clear to his friends and family that he was struggling.
- A10.** Although Nicola is always **(making negative comments about) taking a swipe at** Charles, personally I think it's because she secretly fancies him, at least a little bit and doesn't want him to know.