

APPENDIX C: Idioms

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following sentences contains an idiom in italics. Read the sentence and try to understand the idiom. Then find the meaning of the idiom in the list that follows, and write the letter of the answer on the line.

EXERCISE C1

- _____ 1. He's holding down two jobs and attending school. He's really *burning the candle at both ends*.
- _____ 2. She's buying a lot of new furniture before she even has a job. She's *putting the cart before the horse*.
- _____ 3. Every time he opens his mouth, he immediately regrets what he said. He's always *putting his foot in his mouth*.
- _____ 4. He's not telling me exactly what happened. He's *beating around the bush*.
- _____ 5. She wanted to get that man's phone number, but she wasn't sure of his last name or where he lived. It was like *looking for a needle in a haystack*.
- _____ 6. He's always too fast and out of control on his motorcycle. He's *playing with fire*.
- _____ 7. She keeps asking if I was the one who was spreading rumors about her, but I wasn't. She's *barking up the wrong tree*.
- _____ 8. He took the best portions for himself and didn't leave enough for the others. He's just *looking out for number one*.
- _____ 9. She's been working on that assignment for over two months, and I don't think she's ever going to finish it. She's *taking forever and a day*.
- _____ 10. She has to go to the bank, and while she's out she'll stop and visit her friend. She's *killing two birds with one stone*.
- _____ 11. He was admitted to Harvard, and he would have gone there but he forgot to send in the appropriate form in time. He has really *missed the boat*.
- _____ 12. I know that you thought that this part of the program was difficult, but wait until you see the next part. You're *jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire*.

DEFINITIONS—Exercise C1

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| A. making a mistake | G. missed an opportunity |
| B. accomplishing two things at once | H. saying embarrassing things |
| C. doing something dangerous | I. speaking indirectly |
| D. doing things in the wrong order | J. doing something difficult |
| E. going from bad to worse | K. taking a really long time |
| F. doing too much | L. thinking only about himself |

EXERCISE C2

- _____ 1. His only two choices are to give up his free time or to pay a lot of money, and he doesn't like either choice. He's *between a rock and a hard place*.
- _____ 2. She got 100 percent on the exam and the other students were below 70 percent. She's *head and shoulders above the rest*.
- _____ 3. Every day he fixes meals, cleans the apartment, and goes to the market. It's *all in a day's work*.
- _____ 4. She's a well-known lawyer, a good skier, a great cook, and a painter. She's a *jack-of-all-trades*.
- _____ 5. Every time he puts the toys away, the children just take them out again. Keeping the house clean when the children are there is *like trying to swim upstream*.
- _____ 6. Anytime I need help I go to her because I know she'll help me any way she can. She's *one in a million*.
- _____ 7. He thought he was going to have to come into the office and work on both Saturday and Sunday, but now he doesn't have to. He's *off the hook*.
- _____ 8. She and her classmates all have to read five chapters, write a paper, and prepare for an exam this week. They're *all in the same boat*.
- _____ 9. He and his brother have the same hair, the same eyes, the same smile, and the same expressions. They're *like two peas in a pod*.
- _____ 10. When I saw him with an older man, I just knew that the man had to be his father. He's *a chip off the old block*.
- _____ 11. She's had so much to do to get ready for the trip that she's been running around all day. Now she's *on her last legs*.
- _____ 12. I can't think of the answer, but it will come to me in just a minute. It's *on the tip of my tongue*.

DEFINITIONS—Exercise C2

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| A. very tired | G. in the same situation |
| B. the best | H. nothing out of the ordinary |
| C. exactly alike | I. accomplished at many things |
| D. really wonderful | J. an idea that is not in words |
| E. really difficult or frustrating | K. not responsible any longer |
| F. just like his father | L. without any good options |