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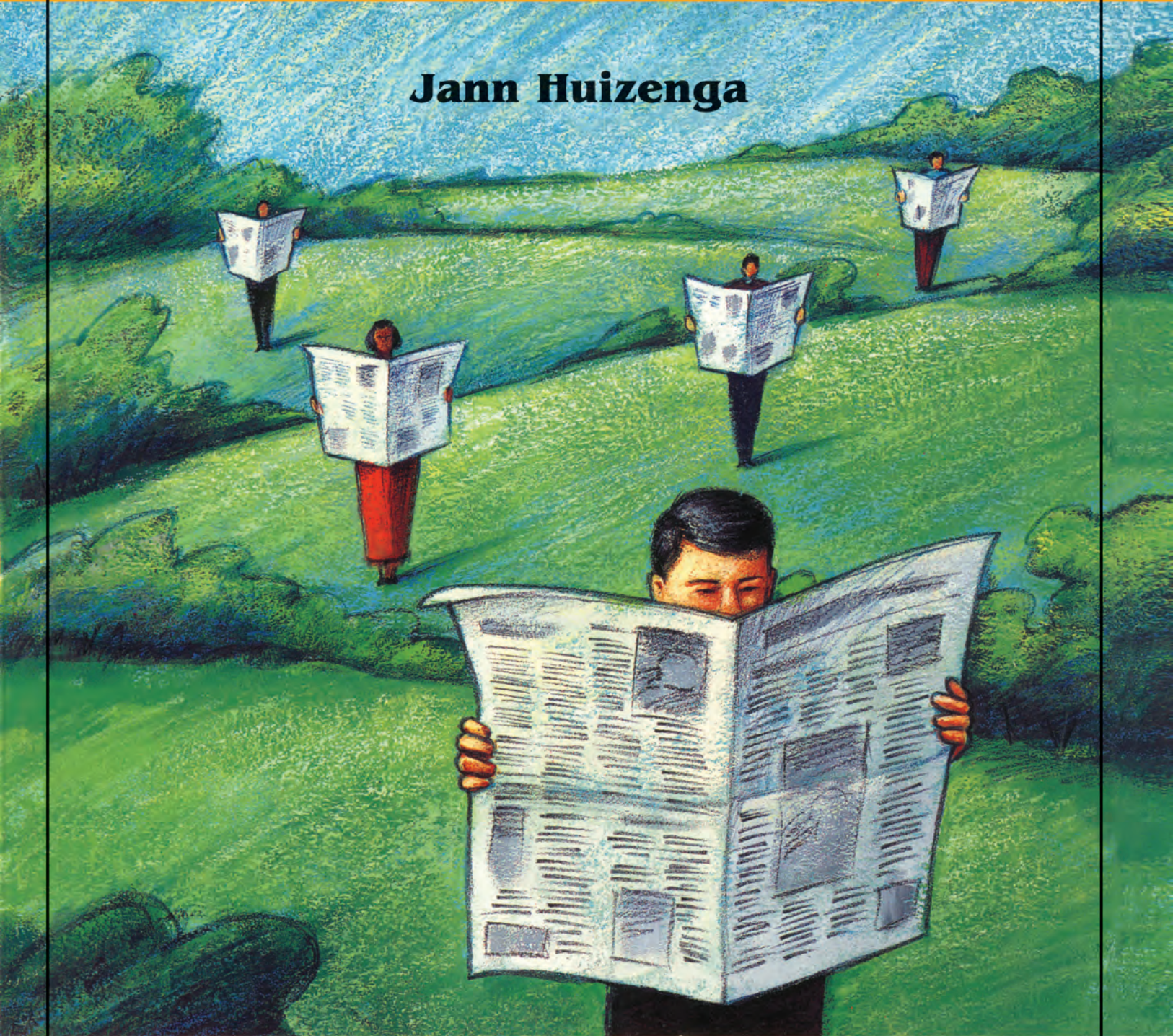
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Can You Believe It

Stories and Idioms from Real Life

Book 2

Jann Huizenga



OXFORD

To the Student

In this book you will enjoy learning everyday idiomatic American English through amazing, true stories from around the world.

When you study vocabulary, it is not enough to learn individual words. Everyday English is filled with expressions that are two or more words long, such as *keep on*, *give someone the green light*, and *after a while*. These expressions are essential to successful communication in English, and they need to be learned as individual units, in the same way as individual words. In this book you will find **idioms**, **fixed expressions**, and **phrasal verbs**.

What is an idiom?

An **idiom** is a group of words that has a meaning different from the meaning of its individual parts. In the example below, you probably know all the individual words, but you still may not understand the meaning of the expression. This is because the expressions are idiomatic.

My sister feels blue about my trip, but I am on top of the world.

Feel blue means *feel sad*; *be on top of the world* means *feel very happy*.

What is a fixed expression?

Be interested in, *be in a hurry*, and *make a mistake* are **fixed expressions**. You will understand the whole expression if you know the meaning of the parts. But the translation of a fixed expression into your language may not be word for word.

What is a phrasal verb?

A **phrasal verb** is a verb followed by a particle such as *in*, *at*, *on*, *for*, etc. *Look for* and *look after* are phrasal verbs that mean *try to find* and *take care of*. Phrasal verbs are usually idiomatic. You can learn more about phrasal verbs in Appendix D, page 114.

The steps to learning idioms in this book are as follows:

1. **Read** the story quickly to get the main idea.
2. **Listen** several times to the story while you look at pictures to get used to the idioms.
3. **Read** the story again and study the idioms.
4. **Tell** the story using the idioms while looking only at pictures.
5. **Talk** about the story and then about yourself using the idioms.
6. **Write** about yourself using the idioms.
7. **Take a dictation** that uses the idioms.
8. **Fill in the blanks** in a dialogue or story using the idioms. Then **role-play** the dialogue or tell the story.

Extra study aids to use with this textbook include:

- A listening cassette
- **Appendix A:** An Answer Key (page 98)
- **Appendix B:** Dictations (page 102)
- **Appendix C:** An appendix that groups the idioms in the book in various ways to help you remember their form and meaning (page 105)
- **Appendix D:** An appendix that explains the grammar of phrasal verbs (page 112) and gives a list of phrasal verbs (page 113)
- **Lexicon:** A list of all the idioms (with definitions) in the book, that gives further examples, language notes, and idiomatic synonyms and antonyms (page 116)

To the Teacher

A general introduction

The goal of *Can You Believe It? Book 2* is to teach high-frequency idioms, two-word verbs, and fixed expressions in the context of true, memorable stories to ESL/EFL students at a high-beginning level. It is founded on two basic premises: 1) that everyone loves a good story, and 2) that vocabulary acquisition occurs more readily when new items are embedded in engaging, whole contexts and used in tasks that have meaning and purpose. The book is written for classroom use, but it will also work well for self-study when used with the audio program.

Thanks in part to Michael Lewis's influential work on lexical issues, TESOL professionals are increasingly aware that idioms and fixed expressions form a significant part of the lexicon of English and are central to natural language use. These prefabricated multi-word expressions must be acquired as wholes in the same way as individual words. *Can You Believe It?* teaches the following kinds of high-frequency fixed lexical expressions:

- traditional, graphic idioms, such as: *give someone the green light, cost an arm and a leg;*
- non-traditional idioms, such as: *spend time, throw a party, change one's mind;*
- two- or three-word adverbial chunks, such as: *now and then, right away, all at once;*
- two- or three-word phrasal verbs, such as: *give up, be interested in, get rid of;* and,
- common expressions consisting of de-lexicalized verbs, such as: *make* or *get* plus a noun or adjective (*get lost, make money*), word partnerships that are likely to produce translation mistakes and need to be learned as chunks.

Can You Believe It? is compatible with comprehension approaches such as The Natural Approach. The picture sequences that correspond to the stories provide the basis for great "comprehensible input," so the book can be used for listening comprehension and general language acquisition at beginning levels as well as for the specific mastery of idioms and expressions.

The approach thoroughly integrates the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Activities are sequenced so that input precedes output. The initial approach relies heavily on listening, with picture sequences used as visual supports for comprehension. It is through this richly contextualized (and repeated) listening that students begin to make hypotheses about the new expressions and develop a feel for their use. Students then go on to read the story—an essential step that will provide welcome written reinforcement for visually oriented learners and will help all students with their literacy skills. After students' pumps have been primed, so to speak, with the listening and reading input, they are ready to begin producing the idioms in speaking and writing. The output activities become progressively more demanding; these include story retelling, thought-provoking personal questions, dialogue production, and dictation.

Researchers contend that we acquire new lexical items by meeting them a number of times (seven times, some say). Thus, in *Can You Believe It?*, students will revisit the idioms and expressions many times within each unit as well as in review units and, to some extent, from unit to unit. (The idioms that are recycled between units have been indicated as such in the Table of Contents, as well as in the New Idioms and Expressions Box which follows the reading.)

Extra Features

Listening Cassette

The cassette features dramatic readings of all the stories in the text and dictations for each unit (from **Appendix B**). The stories are read by different actors with varying voices and styles so students are exposed to language variety.

Answer Key (Appendix A)

Students who use the book independently will especially appreciate this feature, though classroom teachers will also find it handy.

Idiom Groups (Appendix C)

This appendix is a rich resource for those students who would like a better sense of how the idioms in *Can You Believe It?* can be grouped together semantically.

Phrasal Verbs (Appendix D)

Simple but detailed grammar explanations of phrasal verbs are included here for students who feel ready for this information.

Lexicon

The Lexicon gives extra information about each idiom and fixed expression in the book. Definitions, additional examples, grammar information, more collocations, and idiomatic synonyms and antonyms are included.

Specific Teaching Suggestions

The exercises and activities in each unit can be used in a variety of ways, and you are encouraged to experiment and adapt them as you see fit. The suggested sequence can be changed, depending on your goals and your specific class needs. Below are some suggestions for classroom use.

1. Quick Reading

Before students read the story quickly to get the gist, have them do one of the following prediction activities:

- a. Cover the story and look at the picture sequence on the opposite page. Discuss (in pairs or small groups) what the story seems to be about.
- b. Cover the story. Look at the title and the picture on the story page. Make predictions about the story.

Then ask students to read the story quickly just to get the main idea or the basic story line. You might give them a time limit of two or three minutes for this. (The details of the story will become clear during Exercise 2 as they listen to it repeatedly while looking at the picture sequence.) Previewing the story in this manner will allow students, especially those who are stronger visual than oral/aural learners, to relax and better comprehend the story and the new idioms in context during the listening “input” stage. It is best to have students read silently at this stage since they will want to process the text in their own ways.

2. Listen

Ask students to cover the story. Play the cassette or, if you prefer, read the story to students. If you are not using the cassette, be sure to say the numbers as you move from picture to picture so students can follow (at least during the first listening). Tell the story at a natural speed, pausing somewhat longer than usual at the end of breath groups and sentences. This will give students important processing time. The goal of this activity is to provide students with truly “comprehensible input,” i.e., an acquisition stage in which a high degree of contextualization will allow them to formulate hypotheses and discover meaning in language that they are hearing for the first time. Making inferences and hypotheses about new language in context is a skill that all language learners need to feel comfortable with; this exercise thus develops good learning strategies while helping students acquire new language. During a second or third telling of the story, you may want to write the new idioms on the board, as reinforcement for your visually oriented students. (The easiest thing would be to write them on the board prior to the retelling and point to them as they occur.)

As an assessment technique (to see how well students have understood and internalized the new expressions in the story), tell students you are going to talk about the pictures out of order. They should point to the picture you are describing. Or, as an alternative, retell the story making some major “mistakes.” Have students signal somehow (by raising their hands, making faces, or making a buzzing sound) when they hear a mistake.

3. Read the Story

Your more visual learners will be especially eager to take a closer look at the story at this point, double-checking their hypotheses with the New Idioms and Expressions box. After students have had some silent time for re-reading, you might want to have them read aloud for pronunciation practice. Volunteers could take turns reading to the whole class, or pairs could read to each other, helping each other with pronunciation. You may want to do part or all of Exercise 6 at this point (see suggestions below).

For a bit of extra practice with the idioms, and as a good lead-in to Exercise 4, you could conduct the following matching activity: Write the unit idioms on slips of paper or index cards. Cut the idioms in half. Give half to each student. Tell students to stand up, walk around the room, and find the other halves of their idioms. As a check, have the pairs say their idioms aloud to the whole class.

4. Listen and Complete

This activity functions as a type of assessment, a first step in seeing if students can produce the idioms that they've heard so many times. Play the cassette, or if you prefer, read the story to students, pausing in the middle of expressions. When students hear a pause, they can: 1) freely shout the rest of the idiom or sentence, 2) raise their hands if they know how to complete it and be called on individually, or 3) discuss how to complete the idiom or sentence in pairs or groups before volunteering their answers.

5. Tell the Story

At this point, the exercises move away from recognition into production. Elicit the story orally from the whole class first. Encourage students to call out the ideas of the story in chronological order. They can, of course, look at the picture sequence during this activity, but the story should be covered. The retelling will be a paraphrase of the original story, but students will probably reuse most of the new idioms. (You could have the idioms listed on the board to give students a bit of extra help.) You may want to run this activity as a variation on *Language Experience*, writing down sentences and phrases on the board as students suggest them. Underlining the idioms and fixed expressions that students generate will help to highlight them.

Next, ask students to work in pairs or small groups to retell the story to each other. Once again, make sure they cover the story. One way for them to work is with *Talking Chips*, communication regulators used in *Cooperative Learning*. Working in pairs or groups of three, each student takes four or five *Talking Chips* (e.g., tokens, such as buttons, poker chips, or paint chips). Together, they reconstruct the story. As each student contributes a sentence, he or she puts in a token. (The chips ensure that each student speaks and that all have an equal opportunity to participate.)

6. Answer the Questions

As an alternative to the traditional Whole-Class-Question-Answer here, you might want to try using *Numbered Heads Together*, a *Cooperative Learning* structure. The steps to *Numbered Heads Together* are as follows:

- a. Students get into teams of four and number off from 1 to 4.
- b. The teacher asks a question.
- c. Students on each team literally put their heads together and reach a consensus on the answer and the phrasing of the answer.
- d. The teacher calls a number at random. Students with that number raise their hands (or stand up) and report on their team's answer. You will probably want to get each team's answer, as there will be variations to discuss and comment on.

The advantages of this questioning technique over the traditional Whole-Class-Question-Answer are the following: All students are involved since no one knows who will be called on; stronger students help weaker ones; students have "think time" and "rehearsal time" in small

groups before they have to respond in front of the whole class; and a wrong response is not so embarrassing because it comes from a team rather than an individual.

The “About you” questions can be answered orally, either in a whole-class setting or in small groups. These questions are also good springboards for paragraph writing. Allow students to choose their favorite ones to respond to, and to share their writing with partners.

7. Write About Yourself

These sentence completions may be somewhat personal, so students may prefer to share them in small groups rather than with the whole class. You might ask volunteers, though, to put their sentences on the board after groups have shared. Be sure that the volunteers understand that correction may be involved!

8. Write a Dialogue

This exercise generally asks students to write short dialogues in pairs, using at least three idioms. Give students time in pairs not only to create the dialogues, but also to rehearse them (and, ideally, to memorize them). Depending on the time you can devote to this activity, you may want to have pairs perform for other pairs and then for the whole class; or you may prefer simply to call on a few volunteers to perform for class. If you can keep a small stash of props (hats, scarves, sunglasses, and other odd items) available for this activity and ask students to use some props as well as appropriate body language as they perform, this task will be greatly enlivened.

9. Take a Dictation

Play the cassette or use **Appendix B** to read students the dictation. A recommended procedure for the dictation is as follows:

- a. Read the dictation once at normal speed. Students should not write at this stage.
- b. Read the dictation again, this time pausing long enough after each breath group for students to write. (Be sure, in advance, that students know the words *comma* and *period*.)
- c. Read the dictation a third time, at near-normal speed, allowing students to check their writing.

Students can correct their own work or the work of a partner using **Appendix B**. Students might also like to try peer dictations, where one student dictates to another.

10. Complete the Dialogue/Story

After students work individually, in pairs, or in groups to fill in the blanks with the idioms and expressions from the box, they can check their answers in **Appendix A**.

Thirteen of the twenty units have a dialogue exercise. Students can practice the dialogue in pairs, perhaps preparing for an expressive reading of the dialogue for the whole class.

The remaining seven units have a story exercise. After filling in the blanks, students can either practice reading the story to each other in pairs or paraphrase it to each other, being sure to use the idioms from the box in the retelling.

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1 It's No Wonder!

1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 3.
What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.

SARATOV, RUSSIA ¹One day, Olga Petrovic isn't feeling well. ²She goes to see the doctor in her small town in southern Russia. "**What's the matter?**" he asks. ³"**I have a stomachache.**" ⁴And I'm **running a fever,**" she tells him. ⁵The doctor takes an x-ray. He's shocked when he looks at it. There's a 12-inch piece of metal in Olga's stomach. "**That takes the cake!**" he thinks. "**No wonder** she has a stomachache!" ⁶Olga remembers an operation she had 25 years ago. Apparently, the surgeon **made a big mistake** and left a medical instrument inside her. ⁷"We need to **get rid of** it," says the doctor. "You need an operation." Olga **has cold feet** and wants to **put it off**. But her doctor wants her to have the operation **right away**. ⁸Now the medical instrument is gone and Olga is recovering.

New idioms and expressions

(it's) no wonder	it's not surprising
What's the matter?	What's wrong?
have a stomachache	feel pain in one's stomach
run a fever	have a high body temperature
That takes the cake!	That's really strange!; That's the worst!
make a mistake	do something incorrectly
get rid of something*	remove something
have cold feet	be afraid to do something
put something off*	delay or postpone something
right away	immediately

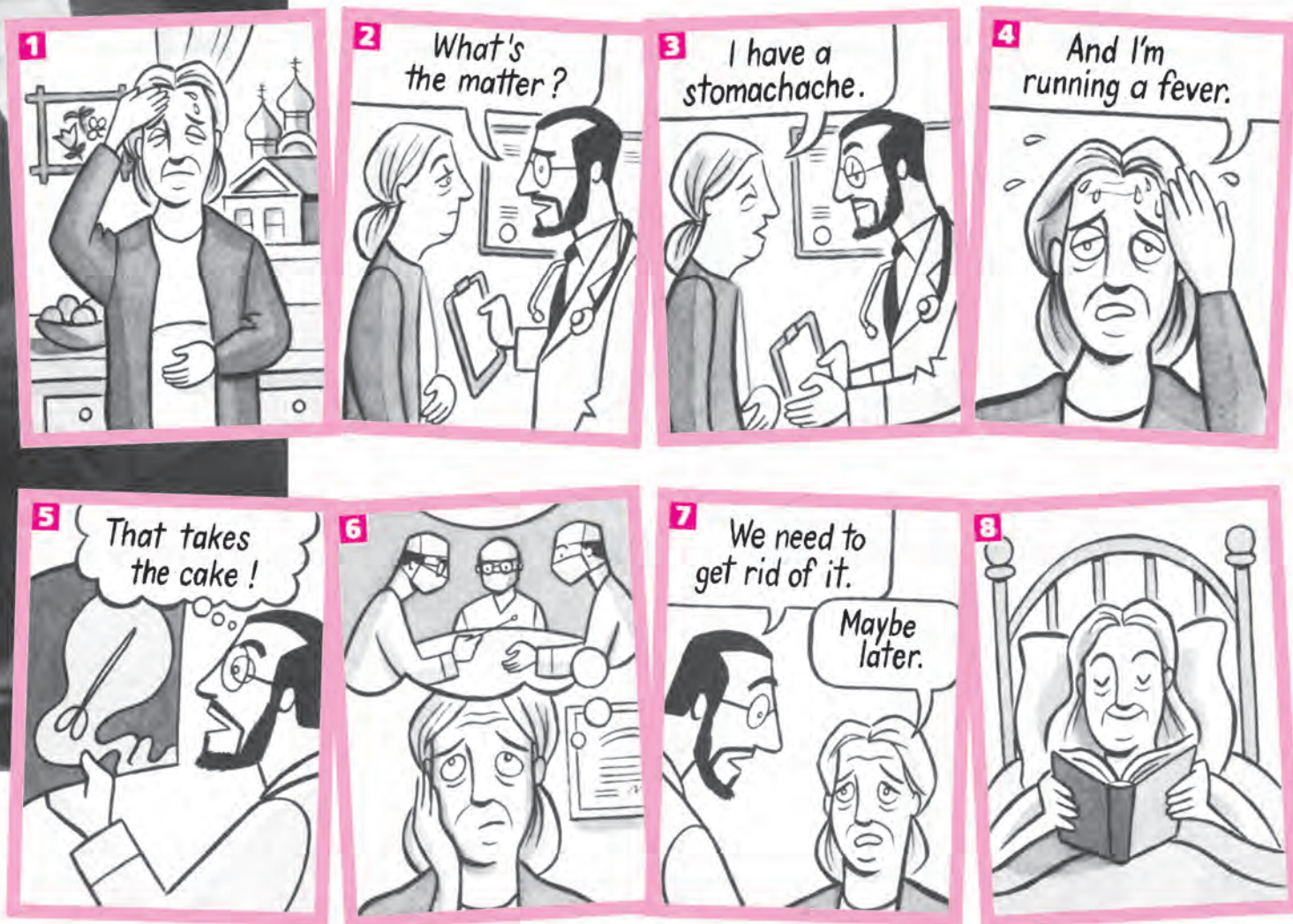
Words in parentheses () can occur with the idiom, but don't have to.

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon, pp. 116–150 and Appendix D, pp. 112–115)

2. Listen

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story three times.

Note: As the tape or your teacher says a number, look at the corresponding picture.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

4. Listen and Complete

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

6. Answer the Questions

About the story.....

- What's the matter with Olga when she goes to the doctor?
- What does the doctor say when he sees the x-ray?
- What happened to her 25 years ago?
- Why does Olga need another operation?
- Why does she want to put it off?

About you.....

- Have you ever had an operation?
- How do you feel today? Do you have a stomachache, a headache, or a cold?
- How often do you think doctors make serious mistakes? Tell about a time when *you* made a big mistake.
- Are you putting off something that you should be doing? If so, what?
- Is there something you won't do because you have cold feet?
- Do you have any bad habits that you'd like to get rid of?

7. Write About Yourself

Complete the sentences, writing something true about yourself.

- When I'm running a fever, I _____.
- I often put off _____ because _____.
- I need to _____ right away.
- I want to get rid of some of my possessions, including _____.

8. Write a Dialogue

Work with a partner. Write a dialogue using at least three idioms from the unit. Act it out for a small group or the class.

9. Take a Dictation

10. Complete the Story

a. Read this true story and fill in the blanks with idioms from the box.

- it's no wonder
- made the mistake
- get rid of
- is running a fever
- has a stomachache
- right away

Doctors Make a BIG Mistake

San Francisco, CA, USA One day, Richard Kearney, 47, has an operation on his bladder. When he returns home from the hospital, he (1) has a stomachache. Several days later, he has a lot of pain and (2) _____.

An X ray shows that there is something large in his stomach. Doctors operate (3) _____ because they know they need to (4) _____ it. When they cut Kearney open, they pull a 2-foot-long towel out of his stomach! Apparently, doctors left it inside him during the first operation.

(5) _____ that Kearney was in pain. He is taking the doctors who (6) _____ to court.

b. Read or tell the story to a partner.

It's About Time! 2



1. Quick Reading

Look at the pictures on page 7.

What is the story about?

Now read quickly to get the main idea.

ANTILLO, ITALY ¹Vittoria Celemi and Sebastio Macaroni live in a small village in Sicily. They **are fond of each other**.²One day, Sebastio gives Vittoria an engagement ring and asks her to marry him. ³Vittoria accepts, but she adds, "Let's wait to **get married** until we **can afford** the perfect wedding! We don't have enough money now."

⁴Vittoria begins to shop for a wedding dress, and she soon finds the perfect one. It's long, lacy, and beautiful. But it **costs an arm and a leg!** ⁵So Vittoria starts to save her money. She makes a small payment every year. She **saves up** for 40 years!

⁶**At long last**, after a 40-year engagement, Vittoria can buy the wedding dress. She and Sebastio decide to **tie the knot**.

⁷At the wedding, Vittoria looks beautiful in her dress. The newlyweds **are in seventh heaven**.

They celebrate their wedding and then they ride off in a horse-drawn carriage. Their friends watch them and think, "**It's about time!**"

New idioms and expressions

It's about time!	.....	It's later than expected!
be fond of (someone)	.....	like (someone) strongly
get married (to someone)	.....	marry (someone)
can afford something	.....	have enough money to buy something
cost an arm and a leg	.....	be very expensive
save up*	.....	keep money so one can use it later
at long last	.....	after a very long time; finally
tie the knot	.....	marry
be in seventh heaven	.....	be very happy

*phrasal verb (see Lexicon and Appendix D)

2. Listen

Cover the story and look only at these pictures. Listen to the story three times.



3. Read the Story

Now read the story carefully. Pay special attention to the idioms so that you're ready for Exercise 4.

4. Listen and Complete

Close your book. Listen to the story again. When the tape or your teacher pauses, try to complete the idiom.

5. Tell the Story

Cover the story and look at the pictures above. Tell the story using as many idioms as you can.

- First, work with the whole class to retell the story.
- Then tell the story to a partner or small group.

6. Answer the Questions

About the story.....

- What does Vittoria say to Sebastio when he asks her to marry him?
- What do you think of Vittoria's decision?
- How long does it take for the couple to tie the knot?
- How do the newlyweds feel?

About you.....

- Are you patient? Can you imagine waiting 40 years for anything? If so, what?
- Take a survey of your classmates. How many are single? How many want to get married? Find out their reasons.
- Is it important to be fond of each other when you get married? Explain your ideas.
- In your country, when a man wants to marry a woman, does he need to get permission from her parents? Does he give something to the woman or her family? Does the woman give something to the man or his family?
- Vittoria's wedding dress cost an arm and a leg. Have you ever bought something that cost an arm and a leg? If so, what?

7. Write About Yourself

Complete the sentences, writing something true about yourself.

- I'm in seventh heaven when _____
_____.
- Recently, I bought _____, and it/they cost an arm and a leg.
- I'm saving up to buy _____ because I can't afford it/them now.

8. Write a Dialogue

Work with a partner. Write a dialogue using at least three idioms from the unit. Act it out for a small group or the class.

9. Take a Dictation

Can You Believe It?

Stories and Idioms from Real Life

Book 2

Can You Believe It? is a three-level series that integrates true and memorable readings with idioms and vocabulary development. *Can You Believe It?* combines a holistic approach to reading with a thorough treatment of high-frequency idioms, phrasal verbs, and fixed expressions.

Designed for young adult and adult students of ESL/EFL at the beginning through intermediate levels, *Can You Believe It?* allows teachers to address reading, oral, and vocabulary acquisition skills together. With its lively visual and aural presentation, the stories and lexical expressions in the series come to life, enhancing student recall of content and vocabulary.

Features:

- ◆ **Unusual and true news stories** on a wide range of topics capture student interest from the very start
- ◆ **Common and essential idioms** are presented in engaging, real contexts that provide clear meaning and natural use of new vocabulary
- ◆ Lively **comic-strip style illustrations** and accompanying **cassettes** provide richly-contextualized visual and aural input and reinforcement of content and idioms
- ◆ Ample opportunities for **producing idioms in speaking and writing** are provided through story retelling, thought-provoking personal questions, dialogue production, and dictation
- ◆ **Review Units** allow additional practice of **form and meaning** of idioms in enjoyable new contexts
- ◆ A complete **Lexicon** offers additional information on collocations, grammar, synonyms, and antonyms

Can You Believe It?

Beginning Level

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Cassette 0-19-437277-4

Low-Intermediate Level

Book 3 0-19-437276-6

Cassette 0-19-437278-2

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