Daily *warm-ups*

COMMON ENGLISH IDIOMS

June Dostal

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to badger someone

Two girls were walking home from school. One asked the other, "Have you tried out the new board game you got for your birthday?"

"No, not yet," replied the girl.

"Why not? Your birthday was two months ago!" the other girl exclaimed.

"Well, I lent it to my brother. He was really eager to try it out, so I gave it to him. He played with it for a while, but now he's tired of it," said the girl.

"If he's tired of it, why doesn't he just give it back to you?" asked the other girl.

"That's the way my brother is. He never returns anything he borrows. I have to ask him again and again before I get anything back. If you want to try it out, I will have to badger him for it."

What do you think the girl meant by saying she will have to badger her brother for the game? Have you ever had to badger someone? Explain.

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to bark up the wrong tree

Mr. Gibbons approached Susan's desk with a frown on his face. "Look at this report," he growled. "It has missing pages and coffee stains, and the math is wrong. How can I send this to the board of directors? Who's responsible for this?" he asked.

"I'm not sure, but I can try to find out for you," replied Susan in a calm voice.

"Don't bother," said Mr. Gibbons angrily. "I know. It's that part-time administrative assistant. This is what happens when you give people jobs they're not ready to do." He stomped into his office and slammed the door.

Susan told a co-worker about the report. When her co-worker asked who really did the report, Susan explained that Mr. Gibbons's assistant, Tom, had done the report. Mr. Gibbons was barking up the wrong tree.

What do you think Susan meant when she said Mr. Gibbons was barking up the wrong tree?

What can you do to avoid making this type of mistake?

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Animal Idioms

one's bark is worse than one's bite

Ms. Healy, the school media center librarian, stormed out of her office. She saw the startled expressions on the faces of students who, moments before, had been chatting, giggling, and talking on cell phones.

"This is a library! People are trying to read! If I have to speak to you again, you will all get detention!" Ms. Healy marched back to her desk.

One new student looked nervous as the noise level began to rise again.

"Don't worry," a classmate reassured him. "Her bark is worse than her bite."

What did the classmate mean by describing Ms. Healy's bark as being worse than her bite?

Do you know anyone whose bark is worse than his or her bite? What is the best way to deal with this kind of person?

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a bull in a china shop

Maria welcomed the visitors as they came to the door. Today was her father's birthday, and she was having a party for him. When it was time for her father to open his presents, she handed him the packages one by one. Her father made a favorable comment about each present and thanked the guests for their thoughtfulness. Everyone thought the presents were wonderful—except Uncle Mario.

"What a silly gift," he said when one box was opened. "That looks very cheap," he said after seeing the contents of another box. He made similar comments for all the gifts.

When the party was over, Maria told her father she was sorry she had invited Uncle Mario to his party. When her father asked why, she replied, "He's like a bull in a china shop."

What did Maria mean by saying Uncle Mario's like a bull in a china shop? What is the best way to deal with people like this?

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