

Asking for Clarification

HARPER: Just so I'm clear on this: you're asking me to **scale back** production on Model 1234?

Logan: Yes, correct. Fuel prices are **skyrocketing** and there isn't as much demand for things that aren't fuel-efficient. Put it on the **backburner** for now.

Harper: Is this the plan **for the long haul**?

Logan: **Pretty much** as long as fuel prices remain at current levels and we're **in the red**. We're **feeling the pinch** with our expansion into Canada and we just don't have **money to burn** like we did a few years ago.

Harper: Okay, I got it. I'll let my team know.

Vocabulary:

Scale back: Reduce something.

Skyrocketing: Increasing rapidly

Backburner: Leave something for now and deal with it later.

For the long haul: For the long term.

Pretty much: Almost 100% certain.

In the red: Losing money.

Feeling the pinch: Experiencing financial difficulties.

Money to burn: Extra money to spend freely.

Exercise:

Fill in the blanks with the correct phrase or idiom.

1. Look at that new car he bought. He must have money to burn
 2. My company is in it for the long haul
 3. I'm worried about this project that's now running in the red
 4. We're feeling the pinch with Covid-19.
 5. I pretty much want to know where I stand with this company.
 6. Let's put this on the backburner until the economy recovers.
 7. Fuel prices are skyrocketing these days with the shortages.
 8. Let's scale back production until the new model comes out.
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Talking about Co-workers

JERRY: Why are all of our co-workers **living hand to mouth**? We get paid a **living wage**. I **can't make heads or tails of it**.

Linda: Well, I think most of them **hit the bottle** pretty hard after work every day. That **costs a pretty penny**. But, your **guess is as good as mine**.

Jerry: **Come to think of it**, I've noticed that too. I used to **drink a lot** but now it's only **once in a blue moon**. I **quit cold turkey** for a couple of years before I could **get a handle on it**.

Linda: Good for you for making a big change like that! Plus, it's saved you a lot of money I'm sure. Don't **blow it all** on stuff that isn't long-lasting, right?

Vocabulary

Once in a blue moon: Something that doesn't happen often.

Quit cold turkey: Suddenly stop doing something addictive. Most commonly refers to smoking.

Living hand to mouth: To live paycheck to paycheck. Not having lots of money, especially disposable income.

Living wage: Salary that is high enough to cover all the monthly bills relatively easily.

Your guess is as good as mine: To not know something.

Hit the bottle: Drink alcohol.

Get a handle on it: To control something.

Costs a pretty penny: Is expensive.

Can't make heads or tails of it: Unable to understand something.

Drink a lot: Consume lots of alcohol.

Come to think of it: On reflection after hearing someone say something about it.

Blow it all: To waste everything, usually money.

Exercise

Fill in the blanks with the correct phrase or idiom.

1. My dad bottle hard when I was a kid.
hit the bottle
2. That new car I want costs a. pretty penny
3. I'm going back to school so can find a job that pays a living wage
4. I only eat junk food once in the blue moon
5. I want to quit smoking but it's difficult to get a handle on it
6. I've heard that the best way to stop smoking is to quit cold turkey
7. It's often hard for single parents to avoid living hand on the mouth
8. Math just isn't my subject! I can't make heads or tails on it
9. Wow! They sure do drink a lot
10. ^{Come to} think of it that was a strange decision Tim made.
11. I'm worried about my Dad and his big pension payout. I think he might blow it all on junk.