

Lesson 11: Why aren't you on time?

Listen to this conversation between Nate and Brad, two co-workers. Do your best to answer the comprehension questions below, then learn the expressions.

Listening Comprehension

- 1. How many times total has Brad been late this week?**
 - a. three
 - b. four
 - c. five
- 2. He was late because...**
 - a. he overslept
 - b. he was sick yesterday
 - c. his car broke down
- 3. Brad works a second job because...**
 - a. he has four children and a lot of expenses
 - b. he needs money to pay for a car accident he had
 - c. he's in debt and he needs to make the minimum payments
- 4. Nate wakes up at...**
 - a. 7 AM
 - b. 8 AM
 - c. 9 AM
- 5. Brad goes to bed late because...**
 - a. he studies at night
 - b. he watches a lot of TV
 - c. he has a busy life
- 6. The boss said that if Brad was late again, he would...**
 - a. be demoted
 - b. lose his job
 - c. receive a pay cut
- 7. Brad is lucky because the boss...**
 - a. didn't see him arrive late today
 - b. is a friend of his family
 - c. needs his work for the company

Conversation Text

Nate: You're late again. This is the *fourth time* this week! You've gotta **get your act together**, or else you're gonna be **in hot water**.

Brad: I overslept, okay? Why do you always gotta **get on my case**? It's not my fault that I'm tired all the time. I'm working a second job, so I've been **burning the midnight oil**.

Nate: You have to work a second job because you **rear-ended** a BMW while **speeding** to work. Why were you speeding? Hmmm, could it be because you were running late?!

Brad: The BMW cut in front of me and then **slammed on the brakes**! And my insurance won't cover the entire repair bill; I have to **cough up** fifty percent out of my own pocket. Man, I'll be working a second job for the rest of my life.

Nate: Brad, things like this wouldn't happen to you if only you would get to work on time. Take me, for an example. I'm always right here at my desk **at the stroke of 9**.

Brad: Don't **rub it in**, Mr. Perfect.

Vocabulary

get your act together = become better organized

in hot water = in trouble

get on my case = criticize me in an annoying way

burning the midnight oil = stay up late working or studying

rear-ended = hit the back of another car

speeding = driving faster than the speed limit

slammed on the brakes = stopped very suddenly

cough up = give money you don't want to give

at the stroke of 9 = at exactly 9:00

rub it in = keep talking about something that makes you embarrassed or upset

Nate: It's not rocket science – all I do is set my alarm clock for 7 AM, so I've got plenty of time to take a shower, have a **leisurely** breakfast, read the paper... and get to work without driving like a **maniac**.

Brad: Yeah, well I set my alarm for 7, too, it's just that I **hit the snooze button** a couple of times. Plus, I've got a life, I've got a girlfriend who likes to go out... ya know, I'm busy. So I usually **hit the sack** around 2 AM.

Nate: Hey, you don't need to explain yourself to me. But make sure the **head honcho** doesn't see you sneaking in at quarter to ten. I **overheard** him tell the HR director that if you were late one more time this week, he'd **give you the boot**.

Brad: Wait... he said he would fire me? No way. ...okay, **granted**, I'm late a lot. But I **make up for it** during the day. I get way more done than those **slackers** in the marketing department.

Nate: That may be true, but if you can't even manage to **show up** on time, how can the company **count on** you for anything that's remotely important? If you get fired, then you **brought it on yourself**.

Vocabulary

it's not rocket science = it's not difficult or complicated

leisurely = slow and relaxed

maniac = crazy person

hit the snooze button = delay the alarm for 8-10 minutes

hit the sack = (slang) go to bed

head honcho = (slang) the boss, the leader, the person in charge

overheard = accidentally heard a conversation with someone else

give you the boot = (informal) fire you; terminate your employment

granted = I acknowledge that this is true

make up for it = compensate for it

slackers = (slang) lazy people

show up = arrive, appear

count on = depend on

Brad: Aw, I can't afford to lose my job. I was planning on retiring with this company!

Nate: Well, you're in luck because the boss called in sick today. No one knows you arrived late except me. But I can't **cover for you** all the time, so just make sure you're here by 9 **from now on**.

Brad: Thanks Nate, **you're a life-saver**. I **swear** I'll be on time from now on. No, I'll do better than that – I'll be early. Just wait and see. I'll get here earlier than you.

Nate: That's what I like to hear. Now, let's get to work.

Vocabulary

you brought it on yourself =
you caused your own
problems

cover for you = provide an
excuse to help someone
escape trouble

from now on = from this
moment and in the future

you're a life-saver = you help
me greatly when I need help

I swear = I promise very
strongly

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Two expressions are not used.

counting on	getting my act together	hit the sack	rubbing it in
from now on	give the boot	in hot water	slacker
gets on my case	head honcho	not rocket science	slam on the brakes

1. I failed my first two semesters in college before _____ and starting to get decent grades.
2. If you _____ when the road is wet or icy, you could lose control of the car.
3. How hard can it be to paint the house ourselves? It's _____, right?
4. I'm not sure how he made all his money. He's probably the _____ of some investment company or something.
5. It took so long for us to finish the decorations that we didn't _____ until 1 AM.
6. My gym membership used to be \$20/month but they're raising the price so _____ it'll be \$40/month.
7. Our basement is pretty messy and cluttered, and my wife always _____ about cleaning it up.
8. The politician was caught in a major lie. He's definitely _____ now.
9. My best friend is kind of a _____; she never finishes anything she starts.
10. I'm _____ you to help me fill out this paperwork correctly, because I don't know how to do it.

Speaking Task

Brad has the bad habit of being late all the time. Talk about one of your bad habits – it could be one that you’ve already overcome, or one that you still have. Also describe one good habit that you have!

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback.

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. b
7. a

Vocabulary Quiz

1. getting my act together
2. slam on the brakes
3. not rocket science
4. head honcho
5. hit the sack
6. from now on
7. gets on my case
8. in hot water
9. slacker
10. counting on