

## Lesson 39: Music Lessons

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*Charlie goes for his violin lesson with Mr. Lee. Listen to their conversation and mark the statements below "True" or "False."*

### **Listening Comprehension**

*True or false according to the dialogue?*

1. Charlie didn't practice this past week because his violin was broken
2. This week was the first time he didn't practice
3. The music lessons with Mr. Lee are free
4. Charlie's parents want him to learn music
5. Charlie enjoys playing sports
6. The winners of some music competitions earn money
7. Charlie thinks he could win a music competition
8. Charlie likes heavy metal rock music
9. Mr. Lee liked country music when he was a boy
10. Charlie approves of Mr. Lee's proposal
11. Mr. Lee cancels today's lesson and says he will see Charlie next week

# Conversation Text

**Mr. Lee:** Hi Charlie, nice to see you! Have you been practicing?

**Charlie:** Sorry, Mr. Lee. This week has been really **packed**.

**Mr. Lee:** That's what you said last week.

**Charlie:** I know it sounds like a **cop-out**, but it's true! I had a huge science project due on Friday, plus I had to **mow the lawn** and help fix my mom's **sewing machine**.

**Mr. Lee:** And the week before last, you said your dog ate your sheet music. Honestly, Charlie, getting you to practice is **like pulling teeth**. How can you expect to **make any headway** if you don't practice? At this rate, you'll never move on to more challenging pieces.

**Charlie:** **I can't help it.** I'm not *trying* to **slack off**... it's just that after taking care of everything else, I can't seem to **muster** the enthusiasm to practice.

## Vocabulary

**packed** = busy, full

**a cop-out** = an excuse (usually a bad excuse for not taking care of your responsibilities)

**mow the lawn** = cut the grass in the area around your house

**sewing machine** = a household machine used to make, adjust, and repair clothes

**like pulling teeth** = extremely difficult and painful

**make any headway** = make any progress

**I can't help it** = I can't behave any differently; I can't do anything to change this situation

**slack off** = be lazy

**muster** = gather, bring up (an emotion)

**Mr. Lee:** Your parents are paying a lot for these lessons, you know. But if you don't **hold up your end of the bargain**, then they're just **pouring money down the drain**.

**Charlie:** To be honest, I wanted to sign up for baseball instead. But I already play soccer, and my mom says taking music classes are part of a **well-rounded** education.

**Mr. Lee:** Well, **I second that**. Look, I know you're not crazy about learning to play the violin. But there has to be something we can do to make these lessons more **bearable**.

**Charlie:** Can't you just tell my mom that **I stink at** the violin, and I'd be better off playing sports after school?

**Mr. Lee:** Well, I'm not ready to **throw in the towel** quite yet! Hmm... what about **prepping** for a music competition? Some of these competitions have cash prizes; that would certainly be an incentive to practice.

**Charlie:** Yeah, but I wouldn't **stand a chance** of winning. The kids who enter those competitions are

## Vocabulary

**hold up your end of the bargain** = do what you agreed / are supposed to do

**pouring money down the drain** = wasting money

**well-rounded** = balanced and including many different areas

**I second that** = I fully agree with and support that

**bearable** = can be tolerated

**I stink at** = I'm terrible at; I have no ability

**throw in the towel** = give up

**prepping** = preparing

**wouldn't stand a chance** = wouldn't have a chance; it wouldn't be possible

probably super **driven**, like, the type to practice 5 hours a day. And I don't wanna be a professional musician or anything, I just wanna have fun.

**Mr. Lee: I see your point.** Hey, here's an idea – what kind of music do you like to listen to?

**Charlie:** Uh, mostly rock. Not like heavy metal, though. I like music that has a melody. Sometimes I **sing along**.

**Mr. Lee:** Perfect! Why don't you give me a list of your favorite songs, and I'll teach you how to play them?

**Charlie:** You can play rock music on the violin?!

**Mr. Lee:** Of course you can! **Come to think of it**, I used to do this a lot when I was your age – except it was with country music instead of rock. The point is, practicing shouldn't feel like **torture**. You might as well play something you enjoy.

**Charlie:** Yeah – that would actually be kinda cool!

**Mr. Lee:** For today, let's just do some exercises to get you back **in the groove**. At the end of the lesson you can write down some songs for me, and we can start working on them next week.

## Vocabulary

**driven** = intensely motivated, ambitious

**I see your point** = I understand

**sing along** = sing accompanying a band or singer

**Come to think of it** = I just remembered

**torture** = causing someone intense pain and suffering on purpose

**in the groove** = doing something well and easily

## **Vocabulary Quiz**

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

<b>can't help it</b>	<b>driven</b>	<b>making headway</b>	<b>slacking off</b>
<b>come to think of it</b>	<b>in the groove</b>	<b>packed</b>	<b>stink at</b>
<b>cop-out</b>	<b>like pulling teeth</b>	<b>prep</b>	<b>threw in the towel</b>

1. After spending five hours trying to fix the dishwasher, I finally \_\_\_\_\_ and called a repairman.
2. I haven't exercised for the past month, so I'm just going to do a short run today in order to get back \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We hired some college students to paint our house, but they've been \_\_\_\_\_ and it's taking much longer than it should.
4. I keep reminding people to RSVP for the party, but they're not giving me a firm answer. It's \_\_\_\_\_.
5. My cousin is very \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sure he's going to be a successful businessman someday.
6. I'm hiring an interior designer because I \_\_\_\_\_ decorating a room.
7. Thanks for helping me \_\_\_\_\_ for my exam. Here's a vocabulary list, you can quiz me on the words.
8. The itinerary for our vacation is completely \_\_\_\_\_ - I don't think we have any free time scheduled.
9. You can't come to my wedding because your car won't start? That's a \_\_\_\_\_. Just take a taxi.
10. My father is \_\_\_\_\_ with his physical therapy; he now has 75% of the strength in his leg back.

## **Speaking Task**

Charlie says he doesn't want to enter music competitions; he just wants to play for fun. What are some hobbies or activities you do (or have done in the past) for fun?

Record your answer at [www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish](http://www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish) or send the MP3 to [homework@espressoenglish.net](mailto:homework@espressoenglish.net) for feedback!

## **Answers**

### **Comprehension Questions**

1. False
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True
11. False

### **Vocabulary Quiz**

1. threw in the towel
2. in the groove
3. slacking off
4. like pulling teeth
5. driven
6. stink at
7. prep
8. packed
9. cop-out
10. making headway