

## Lesson 1: “Give Me A Break!”

*(Paul, a physician’s assistant, **gets a morning coffee break** and calls his friend Matt who’s studying to be an automotive technician at Riverside Community College.)*

Paul: Well, my break’s almost over so I’d better get off the phone soon.

Matt: Me, too. My class, “Introduction to Automotive Systems,” starts at 11:00 and I have **to stop by** my counselor’s office first.

Paul: Who’s teaching it?

Matt: Larry... Larry something... His name’s **on the tip of my tongue**.

Paul: Larry Morrow?

Matt: Yeah, that’s it!

Paul: One of my friends just had a class with him. He said that Morrow gives a lot of work, but that he’ll **give you a break** if you need it. I guess that Morrow let him reschedule a lab exam when he couldn’t **make it** because of his job. And Morrow gave him extra help with the material so that he’d **make it** when he took his final tests.

Matt: Well, that’s good to know. You know, you should take this class, too. \*It’d be so useful for you. Have you ever **thought of** that?

Paul: **Give me a break!** I want *you* to learn it so that *you* can take care of *my* car! And remember, I’ve got a full-time job now.

Matt: That’s true. But it’s still a great idea. So **think about it!**

\*He’d make it = he would make it/It’d be = It would be

### Extra Idiom:

to stop by = to make a short visit to someone

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## Exercise 1:1

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*Directions: Reread the dialogue and put the letter of the best meaning next to each of the idioms below. Use two meanings twice.*

1. \_\_\_/\_\_\_ to get a break (Put two answers.)
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ to make it
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ to be on the tip of one's tongue
  4. \_\_\_/\_\_\_ to give someone a break )Put two answers.)
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ Give me a break!
  6. \_\_\_\_\_ to think of something (The answer is *not* "g.")
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ to think about something
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- a. to have good luck (after a long period of bad luck)
  - b. to be allowed to stop work and relax for a short period
  - c. to allow someone to stop working and relax for a short period
  - d. to be about to be said (but not said, because one cannot remember it or because, at the last moment, one decides not to say it)
  - e. Stop being bad to me! Stop saying ridiculous things to me! Give me an opportunity!
  - f. suddenly to have an idea about something
  - g. to look at something from several points of view, to analyze something
  - h. to arrive somewhere *or* to succeed in a profession or in reaching a goal
  - i. to give someone a lucky opportunity

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## Exercise 1:2

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*Directions: Reread the dialogue and put "True" or "False" next to each of the following sentences.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul has just finished his coffee **break**.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ If Matt doesn't get off the phone soon, he won't **make it** to his class on time.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul's friend needed extra help **to make it** through his classes.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Larry Morrow almost never **gives a student a break**.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul promises **to think about** taking this class with Matt.

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## Exercise 1:3

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*Directions: Put an X next to the best answer for each question below.*

1. If something is **on the tip of your tongue**, maybe
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ you'll suddenly remember it and say it.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ you'll need to go to a dentist to remove it.
  
2. How many **breaks do most workers get** during their workday?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Three or four, including a lunch or dinner break.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ As many as they want.
  
3. If I left home at 8:00 and I **made it to work** before 9:00,
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ I made something before 9:00.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ I **made it to work** in less than an hour.

4. If he **made it** to Bangkok in 2005, he arrived there in 2005, but if
- \_\_\_\_\_ he **made it** in Bangkok in 2005, he became a success in 2005.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ he **made it** in Bangkok in 2005, he came to Bangkok in 2005.
5. Why should employers **give their employees breaks** every day?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because their employees don't pay attention to what they do.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Because it is good for employee productivity and morale.
6. Why might I **give someone a break** in his or her career?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because this person is attacking me personally.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Because I think that this person would make good use of it.
7. Most people
- \_\_\_\_\_ **get career breaks** every week.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ only **get a few career breaks** in life.
8. When I said, "**Give me a break!**"
- \_\_\_\_\_ I wanted you to know that what you said was ridiculous.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I thought you **had too many breaks** and I wanted one of yours.
9. If I say, "I just **thought of something!**" you
- \_\_\_\_\_ might ask me to tell you what my new idea is.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ know that I have spent a lot of time analyzing my new idea.
10. What do people often **think about**?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Whether to go left or right when they turn on to their own street.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Their next summer vacation.

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## Exercise 1:4

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*Directions: Put the best idiom from Exercise 1:1 into each blank space in the sentences below.*

1. Let me think! The name of that author is \_\_\_\_\_ the tip of my tongue! I just finished a book of hers last month, but I just can't think \_\_\_\_\_ her name right now.
2. If I want my new restaurant to \_\_\_\_\_ it, what advice can you give me that will increase my chances of making it as a restaurant owner? Then think about your job or your future job. If you want to make \_\_\_\_\_ in that profession, what do you probably need to do?
3. Joe went to Hollywood where he worked in gas stations and waited on tables in restaurants for five years, but no one ever \_\_\_\_\_ him the break that he was hoping for. Now he just sighs when he talks about his "movie career" and says, "I never \_\_\_\_\_ a break. That's why I never \_\_\_\_\_ it as an actor.
4. Come on. Give \_\_\_\_\_ a break! Let *me* try to do it this time!
5. What have you been thinking \_\_\_\_\_ a lot recently? Is there a decision that you need to make soon?
6. "What a great answer he gave to that question! I wish I'd thought \_\_\_\_\_ that." "Me, too! I always think \_\_\_\_\_ a good answer after it's too late!"
7. Sometimes when people say, "\_\_\_\_\_ me a break!" they are joking, but sometimes they are feeling very frustrated.
8. Do you ever watch game shows on television? Sometimes you can see that the answer is \_\_\_\_\_ the tip of a contestant's \_\_\_\_\_, but that the contestant's mind has suddenly gone blank and he or she just cannot think \_\_\_\_\_ the answer.
9. Pessimistic people may feel that no one will ever give \_\_\_\_\_ a break and so they may be surprised when they actually get one.
10. The expression, "to be in the right place at the right time" suggests that people are more likely to \_\_\_\_\_ a break if they are visible and available at the time when someone else is ready to \_\_\_\_\_ someone a break.
11. Wait a minute! I just \_\_\_\_\_ of a way to solve our problem!

12. “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” is a saying that tells us that everyone needs to get (or take) a \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes.
13. “What street was that café on, the one that you liked so much in Vienna? Remember, the one where we had those spinach crepes for lunch, not far from the Volksgarten. It’s on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ tongue. Neus... Neus...” “Oh, sure, I know. That was the café Phonixhof, on Neustiftgasse.”
14. If you get a long enough \_\_\_\_\_ at lunchtime, you might be able to make it home for lunch. Have you ever had a long enough break at lunch so that you could make it to your home or to a restaurant for lunch? Or have you always eaten at your school or workplace?
15. I was just about to tell Bob what had happened to my friend (in fact, it was on the tip \_\_\_\_\_ my tongue) when I suddenly remembered that I had promised not to tell anyone about it.
16. Don’t you wish that the teacher would \_\_\_\_\_ us a break and let us have just one night without homework? No? You don’t? \_\_\_\_\_ me a break! I don’t believe you!
17. From Riverside, California, we can \_\_\_\_\_ it to San Francisco in six hours by car and in one hour by plane. From my house, I can \_\_\_\_\_ it to my classroom in twenty-two minutes on foot. Think of one of your favorite places to visit and then finish this sentence: “I can make \_\_\_\_ there in ...” What about your school or your job? How fast can you make it there (on foot, by bus, by subway, by car, etc.) when you’re in a big hurry?
18. Are you hoping that someone will \_\_\_\_\_ you a break someday? What kind of a break would you like to \_\_\_\_\_?
19. Many greeting cards say, “Thinking *of* you...” to show that we are concerned about someone who is sick or has had an operation, etc. They almost never say, “Thinking \_\_\_\_\_ you...” because we want to emphasize that we’re remembering or visualizing a person, not analyzing his or her personal situation. On the other hand, we often say that mothers \_\_\_\_\_ *about* their children because mothers usually don’t just remember or visualize their children, they imagine their children’s situation from several points of view. (What are they doing now? How can I encourage them to...? How can I protect them from...? Etc. Etc.)
20. The difference between “to think \_\_\_\_\_” and “to think about” is small and, in many situations, we could use either one. Therefore, I never test students on the difference between them. I simply encourage students to watch *You’ve Got Mail* and to notice where the actors use “to think of something” and where they use “to think \_\_\_\_\_ something.”