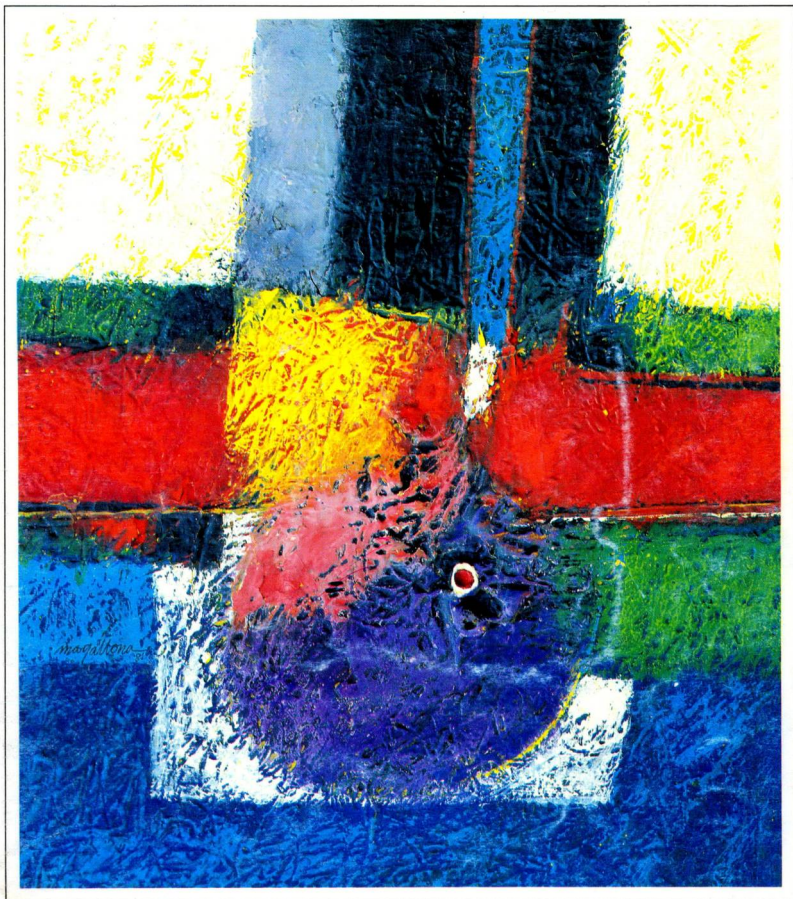


ENGLISH IN COLOR

Dean Curry



A Resource/Reference Text
For Advanced Students of English
As A Foreign Language

ENGLISH IN COLOR

Dean Curry



61 Colorful Idioms
in English with
Practice Exercises

Advanced Level

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ENGLISH IN COLOR

Donna Carter

51 Colorful Idioms
in English with
Practice Exercises

FOREWORD

English in Color contains 61 idioms in which color plays a principal role. The basic intent of the text is to help students of English as a foreign language increase their knowledge of idiomatic expressions and have fun while doing it.

It is interesting to note that the colors most used in the idiomatic expressions are four: *black*, *blue*, *red*, and *white*, the most common being *blue*. The fact that blue is the most preferred color of the four probably would lead one to note, at least, that the sky is blue and so is the ocean and both surround the land masses on which people live!

No doubt this color proclivity has psychological significance, but it is not the intent of this booklet to examine factors involved in the favoritism of these four colors. We will leave the discovery of the social, political, economic, religious—and emotional parameters—contained in colorful expressions to others.

The five sections of each chapter provide an opportunity for lively discussion and practice using the idioms. The text may be used by students individually as resource material and individual study or by teachers as a supplemental language activity book in the classroom. Teachers so using the text are encouraged to elicit more communicative language activities by taking advantage of reactions evoked by the discussions.

Some colorful language experiences await you!

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1

BLACK AND BLUE means *discolored from a bruise*

IN CONTEXT

After her fall down the stairs, Linda was all black and blue, and limped around for days before the stiffness left.

- I **WHY** was Linda *black and blue*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it better to be *black and blue* than to suffer broken bones? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following could be *black and blue* as a result of their activities?
 - a. A boy whose bicycle hits a post
 - b. A grandmother seated before a fire in her living room
 - c. A ballet dancer after an excellent performance
 - d. A policeman trying to break down the door of a hotel room
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black and blue*.

When Evan took off his shirt, we could see that his arms were quite discolored in a number of places.
- V **WHEN** did you last suffer from being *black and blue*?

2

BLACK AND WHITE means *writing or print*

IN CONTEXT

"Before I'll make a deal with Harry," John said. "I want him to put it in black and white. We need a written contract."

"A good idea," Brian replied. "Otherwise you just have to take his word for it."

- I **WHY** is it a good idea to ask Harry to make a deal in *black and white*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it always better to get agreements down in *black and white*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the following people should ask for something in *black and white*? If so, what?
- a. A man who has just made a payment on his new car
 - b. A baby that is offered a movie contract
 - c. A student that has delivered her master's thesis to a professor
 - d. A young man who has bought a diamond engagement ring for his fiancée
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black and white*.
The only way Ed could understand the problem was to see it in print.
- V **WHEN** do you demand that things be in *black and white*?



BLACKBALL means *to vote against the admission of; to exclude from a social group*

IN CONTEXT

The committee met and discussed Mrs. Patton's qualifications for membership in the club. Some doubts arose about her past quarrels with various club members about certain matters. Finally, the committee decided to blackball her since they felt that she was not a very cooperative person.

- I **WHY** was Mrs. Patton *blackballed*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is *blackballing* not very democratic? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following would be *blackballed* in a club for wealthy persons only?
- a. A ship's captain who has retired on a pay of \$800 a month after 35 years of service
 - b. A young woman whose father owns an airline, two large corporations, and is the president of one of the nation's largest banks
 - c. A widow whose husband has left her an income of \$4,000 per month plus a large cattle ranch, some bonds, and a gold mine

- d. A university student who has to save his wages from summer jobs to help pay for his education

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blackball*.

After the vote was taken and the results counted, they discovered that no one had voted against admitting James Clark and Richard Warner.

V **WHEN** did you last *blackball* anyone?

4

BLACK HUMOR means a morbid or bizarre form of humor, especially in novels and plays

IN CONTEXT

"How did you like Burt Lancaster's latest movie?"

"Parts of it were okay, but too many scenes were so weird that the black humor was overwhelming and rather depressing."

- I **WHY** was the *black humor* of the movie unpleasant?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do novels, movies, or plays with a lot of *black humor* have a lot of appeal? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following may contain *black humor* of some form?
- a. A story about a romance between an airline pilot and a stewardess
 - b. A play concerning the life of a poor family living in a depressed area of a large city
 - c. A movie concerning two high school friends who join the army together and go off to war
 - d. A long novel about the settlement of the wilderness area of a large country
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black humor*.
- The plot of that play was so bizarre that the funny scenes were more morbid than humorous.
- V **WHEN** do you enjoy *black humor*?

5

BLACKLIST means *a list of persons or organizations to be disapproved or suspected of disloyalty, misconduct, etc.*

IN CONTEXT

Harry's name was on nearly every blacklist used by the different companies to help them decide on qualified job candidates. Harry frequently was named as having been a suspect in a number of crimes connected with fraud. As a consequence, no company wanted to hire him.

- I **WHY** was Harry's name on a number of *blacklists*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are *blacklists* unfair? Give your reasons?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the following may be on some organization's *blacklist*?
 - a. A widow who has just moved into a new apartment
 - b. An athlete who has just won first place in a number of events in an international track meet
 - c. A teacher who has been dismissed from various teaching positions but to whom no reason was given for dismissal
 - d. An electrician who can't get a job in his home town
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blacklist*.

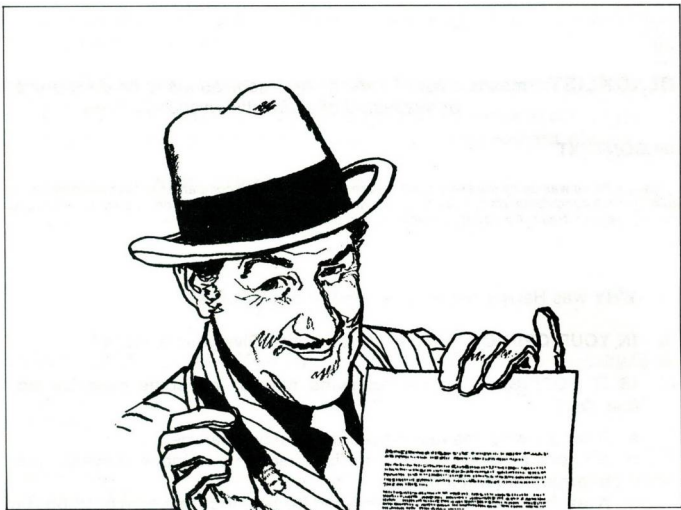
They discussed Jim's attitude and although it was bad, they decided not to add his name to the others.
- V **WHEN** were you ever on a *blacklist*?

6

BLACKMAIL means *extortion by the threat of exposure or criminal prosecution.*

IN CONTEXT

The day after he received the threatening letter, John decided to go to the police. When he showed them the letter, containing the demand for \$250,000, the police told him that it was blackmail. The letter threatened to make public John's short term in prison for fraud.



A little matter of *blackmail*, perhaps?

- I **WHY** does John go to the police?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, should John pay the money? Explain why or why not.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are good targets for *blackmail*?
 - a. A man who hides his past from his friends and seldom visits them
 - b. A woman who mysteriously disappears from her house and then just as mysteriously reappears some days later
 - c. A family of four that has just returned from its vacation
 - d. A banker who seems to get richer without ever showing how he has come to have so much money
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blackmail*.
 The gang tried to frighten the old woman and threatened to expose her sinful past if she didn't pay them the money.
- V **WHEN** did you last have to pay *blackmail*?

7

BLACK MARKET means the selling of goods at illegal prices or in illegal quantities

IN CONTEXT

During the war, the only way that we could get certain things, such as nylon stockings or gasoline, was to buy them on the black market. There was always a short supply or complete lack of certain items in the stores. Nevertheless, the black marketeers, as they were called, never seemed to have a lack. Of course, their prices were exorbitant—three to four times the regular price—or even more!

- I **WHY** did people have to buy on the *black market*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do wars nearly always create *black markets*? Are they the only cause?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the following might create *black market* conditions?
 - a. A presidential decree limiting the sale of gasoline
 - b. A law prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages to persons under 21 years of age
 - c. A shortage of flour
 - d. An excess of rain
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black market*.

The police caught a number of men who were selling cigarettes that had entered the country illegally.
- V **WHEN** did you ever buy on the *black market*?

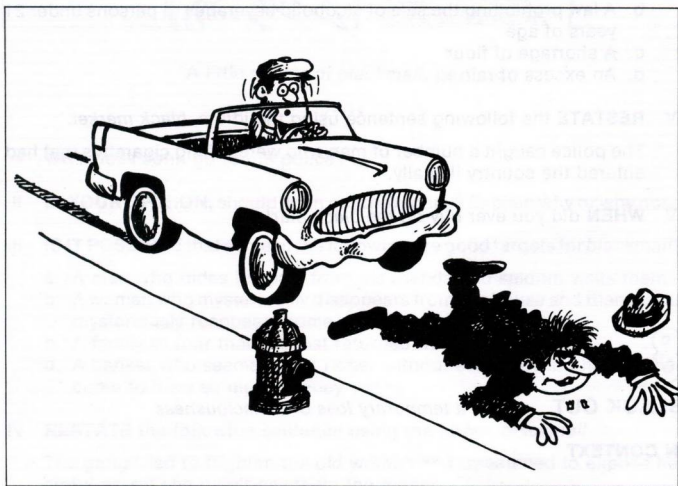
8

BLACK OUT means a temporary loss of consciousness

IN CONTEXT

According to the newspaper, the cause of the accident was not known for certain. However, one of the drivers had suffered from heart attacks and the police believe that he suffered a black out. The car went out of control, and then ran into the other vehicle.

- I **WHY** did one car go out of control?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, should persons with bad hearts not drive cars?
Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following could have a *black out*?
- a. A nurse who has just come on duty after a good night's sleep
 - b. A doctor who has finished playing a game of tennis and has sat down to eat his dinner
 - c. A young woman with diabetes and high blood pressure who has forgotten to take her medication
 - d. A young boy who has climbed a tall tree and suddenly is caught up in a fear for high places
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black out*.
- When her husband announced the death of her father, she suddenly began to feel weak and soon lost all consciousness.
- V **WHEN** did you last suffer (from) a *black out*?



Did he *black out* after he fell over the fire hydrant?

9

BLACK SHEEP means a person considered disgraceful by his family

IN CONTEXT

Tom ran away from home at age 16. He got into trouble and spent some time in prison. From there he progressed into bank robbery, was captured and spent more time in prison. Finally, at the age of 44, he decided to earn his living honestly and today he is no longer the black sheep of his family. His family is quite proud of him and the transformation they see in his life.

- I **WHY** was Tom a *black sheep*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do many families have a *black sheep* or two? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following might be considered *black sheep*?
 - a. An old man who has been poor all of his life
 - b. Twin boys who decide to join the armed forces
 - c. A young woman who abandons her parents and starts a life of gambling
 - d. A married couple who join a gang of thieves for the thrill of robbing homes of jewels and money
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black sheep*.

After the police had come to his house several times to investigate some of his business activities, he felt sure that his family regarded him quite unfavorably.
- V **WHEN** was the last time your family had a *black sheep*?

10

BLACK TIE means formal evening dress that includes a black bow tie and dinner jacket or tuxedo

IN CONTEXT

Because it was one of the most important events on the season's social calendar, black tie was the required dress. Some people came dressed informally, but were not admitted,—much to their chagrin.

- I **WHY** was *black tie* required?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, should *black tie* be a required type of dress for some social functions? Give reasons for your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following will require *black tie*?
- a. A large wedding at a cathedral
 - b. A visit to an experimental farm
 - c. A presidential inauguration
 - d. A dinner at the king's palace
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *black tie*.
- "Since the affair is to be held out-of-doors, there is no need for formal evening dress," Margot said.
- V **WHEN** do you dress in *black tie*?



IN THE BLACK means *prosperous*

IN CONTEXT

The company lost money for about four years, but last year sales increased and profits were quite high. The president of the company was pleased to announce that the company was finally in the black.

- I **WHY** was the company finally *in the black*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do many people find it difficult to stay *in the black*? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are NOT *in the black*?
- a. A corporation that has made some bad investments in mining projects
 - b. A family that has inherited a gold mine from an uncle who has died
 - c. A store that has burned to the ground and whose owner has very little insurance
 - d. A restaurant that has become the most popular one in the city

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *in the black*.

We bought the store very cheap because it was losing money, but within four months we were making a good profit.

V **WHEN** are you most often *in the black*?



In the black



BLUE

(14 expressions)



1

(TO) BE BLUE; FEEL BLUE; HAVE THE BLUES; SING THE BLUES

means to be gloomy, sad, or depressed

IN CONTEXT

"I have the blues so often when it's cloudy and rainy. Do you feel blue when it rains?"
"Oh, sometimes I'm blue on a gray day. But you should see Dorothy. She sings the blues all the time, whether the day is sunny or cloudy!"

- I **WHY** are people blue? WHY do they feel blue? WHY do they *have the blues* or *sing the blues*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are most people blue or do they feel blue on a rainy day?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *feeling blue* or *singing the blues*?
 - a. A man who has just lost all his money in the stock market
 - b. A couple that has just got married
 - c. A ship captain whose vessel has sunk in a bad storm
 - d. A wife whose husband has just given her a diamond necklace
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idioms, *have the blues*, *feel blue*, or *sing the blues*.

One could tell that he was sad by the gloomy expression on his face and he began to speak about his depression for all to hear.
- V **WHEN** did you last *have the blues*? What caused it?

2

BLUE BLOOD means noble or aristocratic descent

IN CONTEXT

Elaine Courtney considers herself a blue blood because her family is descended from some famous aristocratic family, or so she says. I don't believe it. I think that she has invented the whole thing!

- I **WHY** is Elaine Courtney a *blue blood*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do many people pretend to be a *blue blood*?
Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *blue bloods*?
- a. A king in exile in New York City
 - b. A secretary in an office in San Francisco
 - c. A member of a tennis club
 - d. A son of the first family to settle in an unexplored region
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue blood*.
By the way he spoke, acted, and walked with great dignity, many people thought that he was of noble descent.
- V **WHEN** did someone think that you were a *blue blood*?

3

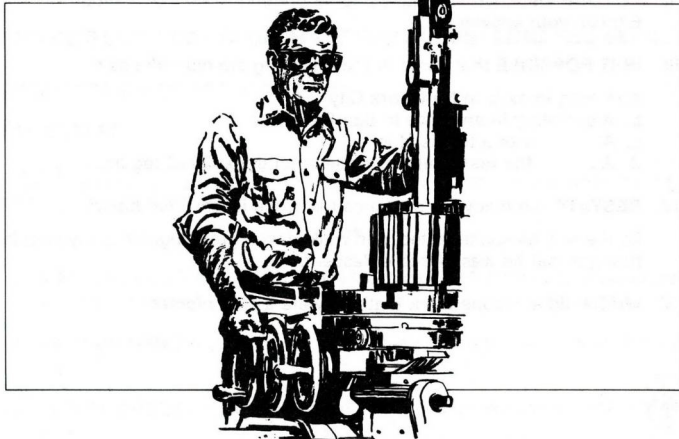
BLUE-COLLAR WORKER means *person whose work involves manual labor*

IN CONTEXT

The owner of the factory gave a big party for all the blue-collar workers, the men who ran the machines and those who drove the trucks. There was plenty of food and fun for all. The owner wanted to honor the workers because the year was very profitable.

- I **WHY** did the owner give a party?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do *blue-collar workers* work harder than most people? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *blue-collar workers*?
- a. A waiter in a restaurant
 - b. A cowboy
 - c. An automobile mechanic
 - d. A manager of a store
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *blue-collar worker*.
All the laborers who worked on the construction site went on strike.

V **WHEN** were you ever a *blue-collar worker*?



A blue-collar factory worker

4

BLUE FUNK means a *state of emotional depression*

IN CONTEXT

Nearly every time my father reads the newspaper or watches television about the sad state of the economy he gets into a blue funk. Sometimes he won't even speak to the rest of us for two or three days, especially when he loses money in the stock market.

- I **WHY** does my father get into a *blue funk*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do problems with money frequently put people in a *blue funk*? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following could cause a *blue funk* in people?
 - a. The loss of a championship game by one's favorite team

- b. The renewal of friendship with old friends not seen in a number of years
- c. The payment of a bonus by a company to all of its employees
- d. The continual rise in the cost of food and clothing

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue funk*.

If you remain in a depressed state of mind too long, it can make you ill.

V **WHEN** were you last in a *blue funk*?



Poor Harry just sat there in a *blue funk*.

5

BLUE LAW means *any very strict law regulating personal conduct, such as laws prohibiting dancing or going to the movies on Sunday*

IN CONTEXT

That town has so many blue laws that it is difficult to do anything on Sunday. Even the restaurants aren't open, and, of course, there are no movies. The blue laws were passed many years ago when the leaders of the town were very religious.

I **WHY** does the town have so many *blue laws*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are *blue laws* needed to improve morality?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *blue laws* govern some of the following?
- a. A daughter is not allowed to go out alone with her boyfriend.
 - b. There is no liquor on sale.
 - c. Nightclubs are closed.
 - d. A teacher can't smoke at school.
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue law*.
- The town council decided to repeal all the laws that restricted the personal conduct of the citizens.
- V **WHEN** are *blue laws* necessary?

6

BLUE MONDAY means *a depressing day since it is the first day of work after a two-day weekend.*

IN CONTEXT

"I hate to go back to work on Monday. We had such a nice time over the weekend," Nancy said.
"Me, too," Allie replied. "It really is blue Monday, so depressing after two days of fun!"

- I **WHY** does Nancy hate to go back to work?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are other days of the week more depressing than blue Monday? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that Monday will be blue for the following people?
- a. A married couple expecting the birth of their first child
 - b. A secretary just home after two weeks vacation
 - c. The president of a large company who has played golf all weekend
 - d. A high school student who has spent the weekend fixing his car
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue Monday*.
- Today's Sunday and tomorrow will be a sad day after a wonderful weekend.
- V **WHEN** did you last experience a *blue Monday*?

7

BLUE-PENCIL means to edit or censor

IN CONTEXT

Norman thought that he had written an excellent article, but when he got it back from the editor-in-chief, he could hardly believe his eyes. The chief had blue-pencilled it so much that little of the original text remained. The only comment the chief wrote was: "Learn to use simpler words and a more direct style of writing!"

- I **WHY** did the editor-in-chief *blue-pencil* Norman's article so much?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do most of us need to be *blue-pencilled* when we write a report or an article?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following don't need to be *blue-pencilled*?
 - a. A poem by William Shakespeare
 - b. An essay written by a high school student
 - c. A speech prepared for the prime minister
 - d. A movie script
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue-pencil*.

The committee decided that it had to censor the remarks of the chairman before releasing the document for publication.
- V **WHEN** do you feel it necessary to *blue-pencil* things you have written?

8

BLUE PRINT means a detailed plan for any enterprise or undertaking

IN CONTEXT

The committee of local residents presented to the Council their blue print for the development of a recreational area in the community. They pointed out the need for such an area because of the large number of children who needed a place to play. For the adults, as well, they proposed a number of facilities.

- I **WHY** did the committee present a *blue print* to the Council?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is a *blue print* a necessity before any undertaking?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the following will be preceded by a *blue print* of some kind?
- a. The purchase of a gallon of ice cream
 - b. The building of a community swimming pool
 - c. The development of a neighborhood counselling service
 - d. The erection of a clock tower on the main street of a town
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue print*.
- They invited him to send in the details of his plan for collecting garbage more efficiently.
- V **WHEN** have you had to submit a *blue print* for anything?



BLUE RIBBON means *the first prize; the highest honor*

IN CONTEXT

"My sister, Jean, won a blue ribbon for taking first place in the 60-yard dash."

"Really? When did she do that?"

"Yesterday at the Field Day at school. She was the fastest runner among the sixth grade girls."

- I **WHY** did Jean win a *blue ribbon*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is a *blue ribbon* a good way to designate a winner?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following received a *blue ribbon*?
- a. A man who retires after 35 years at the same job
 - b. A sailor who falls overboard
 - c. A woman whose cake is the best at the state fair
 - d. A boy who finds a lost cat
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue ribbon*.
- The judge handed her the first prize for her essay on democracy.

V **WHEN** did you ever get a *blue ribbon*?

10

BLUE STOCKING means a woman who displays great interest in intellectual or literary subjects

IN CONTEXT

"Sometimes Mrs. Pruitt acts as if we know nothing about art or literature," Gabrielle remarked.
"Yes," Kathy responded. "She's a blue stocking, but she seems to think that she can criticize others whenever she feels like it."
"She certainly likes to show off her knowledge of modern art," Gabrielle added. "She never misses an art show!"

I **WHY** is Mrs. Pruitt a *blue stocking*?

II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are *blue stockings* often a little overbearing?

III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following might be *blue stockings*?

- The wife of an army general who enjoys giving parties
- The mother of an art student who can't understand her daughter's interest in art
- A librarian who spends most of her leisure time reading literature and attending plays
- A clerk who works in a large bookstore

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue stocking*.

Because of her strong interest in poetry, many people assumed that Molly Bagley was also greatly interested in all kinds of literary subjects.

V **WHEN** have you known or met *blue stockings*?

11

BLUE STREAK means anything very fast

IN CONTEXT

When Walter saw the bear approaching, he took off like a blue streak, running as fast as he could.

- I **WHY** did Walter take off like a *blue streak*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, would most people take off like a *blue streak* if they saw a bear? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following would take off like a *blue streak*?
- a. Someone waiting in the dentist's office
 - b. Someone who finds a bag of gold coins
 - c. Someone who hears a strange noise on the roof
 - d. Someone who has fallen asleep at the movies
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *blue streak*.
- As soon as he heard the news, he ran out the door very fast, got in his car, and sped off.
- V **WHEN** did you last take off like a *blue streak*?

12

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON means *very seldom; rarely*

IN CONTEXT

In recent years, we don't often get a chance to visit our grandparents. They live so far away. We get to see them once in a blue moon.

- I **WHY** do we see only our grandparents *once in a blue moon*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it better to see one's relatives only *once in a blue moon*? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that it would be better to see the following *once in a blue moon*?
- a. An aunt who complains most of the time about the state of world affairs
 - b. A brother who enjoys sharing his home, food, companionship, and material goods with others
 - c. A friend who habitually leaves his/her apartment so cluttered and dirty that the atmosphere is unpleasant
 - d. A sister who strongly dislikes pizza

- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *once in a blue moon*.

I get over to Lynn's house very seldom these days because I have so little time on my hands.

- V **WHEN** do you prefer to do things *once in a blue moon*?

13

OUT OF THE BLUE means *from an unexpected source or at an unexpected time*

IN CONTEXT

Suddenly, out of the blue Joe got an inspiration for a lovely poem about autumn leaves and sat down and began to compose it.

- I **WHY** do ideas sometimes come *out of the blue*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do one's best thoughts or ideas come *out of the blue*?
Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following came *out of the blue*?
- The plan for the organization of a new company to manufacture airplanes
 - The idea for a new kind of safety pin
 - The thought that leads to a sudden decision to take a vacation
 - The outline of a program to develop better ways to raise food in impoverished areas
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *out of the blue*.
How did it happen? Well, it just occurred to me in a flash, came to me suddenly when I was eating breakfast.
- V **WHEN** did you last get an idea *out of the blue*?

14

TRUE BLUE means *very loyal*

IN CONTEXT

Pat is the kind of friend everyone dreams of. She is loyal in every way, and rarely criticizes or seeks ways to get the advantage. One can rely on her loyalty, even in difficult circumstances. She is true blue and is always ready to help.

- I **WHY** is Pat *true blue*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are most friends *true blue*? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *true blue*?
 - a. A young man who swears his undying love for a young woman
 - b. A factory worker who doesn't come to work regularly
 - c. A teacher who spends all his time avoiding his friends and family
 - d. A wife who remains faithful to her husband even when he expresses dislike for her
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *true blue*.

"You're really a loyal friend," Jane remarked. "You're always there when I need you."
- V **WHEN** have you discovered friends who were *true blue*?



GRAY

(1 expression)



1

GRAY MATTER means *intelligence; brains*

IN CONTEXT

"Mark Chester is a guy with a lot of gray matter," Laura said.

"Yeah. He's really got brains," Wendy agreed. "He gets A in all his courses and has already won two scholarships."

- I **WHY** does Wendy think that Mark has a lot of *gray matter*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it sometimes difficult to have a lot of *gray matter*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following show that they have good *gray matter*?
 - a. A six-year old boy who can do college level calculus
 - b. A ten-year old girl who can play with great skill music by Brahms, Bach, and Chopin
 - c. A 70-year old woman who decides to go back to school and get her master's degree
 - d. An auto mechanic who has more than 50 inventions to his credit
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *gray matter*.

In learning, there is no substitute for intelligence and brains.
- V **WHEN** did you first discover that you have a lot of *gray matter*?



GREEN

(4 expressions)

1

GREEN AROUND THE GILLS means *pale and sickly in appearance*

IN CONTEXT

"You certainly look green around the gills," Mary said. "Don't you feel well?"
"No. In fact I think I'll go home and go to bed. I feel terrible," Fred replied.

- I **WHY** is Fred *green around the gills*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do sick people often look green? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following persons may become *green around the gills*? Why or why not?
 - a. A boy riding his bicycle to deliver newspapers
 - b. A young woman on her first boat trip
 - c. A little boy who has just eaten a lot of chocolate candy
 - d. A man who has accidentally swallowed a lot of sea water while swimming in the ocean
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *green around the gills*.
The mother was startled by her son's very pale face and his apparent lack of strength.
- V **When** were you last *green around the gills*?



"What's the matter with you? You look *green around the gills*."

2

GREEN LIGHT means *permission to proceed*

IN CONTEXT

"We might as well go ahead with plans for the trip," Morris said.

"Yes. I agree," Laurie replied, "since he gave us the green light yesterday and said that funds will be available."

- I **WHY** are Morris and Laurie making plans for a trip?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it sometimes wiser to proceed only after getting a *green light*? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following should proceed only after getting a *green light*? Why or why not?
 - a. A little girl who wants to spend the night at a friend's house
 - b. An old man who wants to visit his grandchildren in another city
 - c. A mother who has to buy groceries for her family
 - d. A husband who needs to get gasoline for his car
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *green light*.

My dad said that it was okay for me to take the Jeep on the trip to the mountains.
- V **WHEN** did you last give anyone a *green light*?

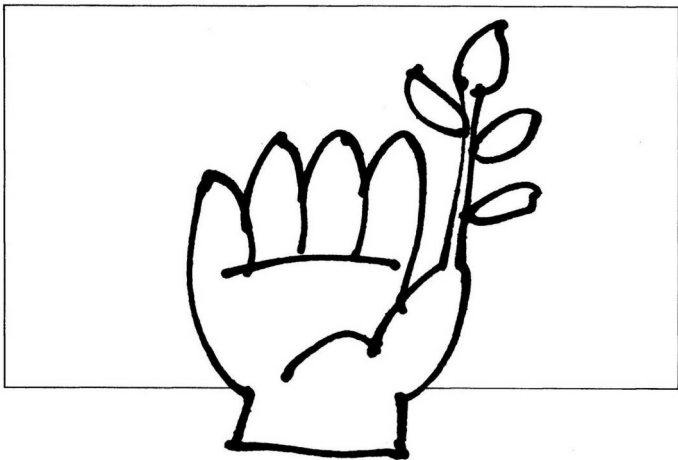
3

GREEN THUMB means *the ability to grow healthy plants*

Mrs. Jane Halliday always seems to have success in growing things. Her flower garden never seems to be lacking in strong, healthy, beautiful plants and flowers. Her vegetable garden also always appears to be healthy and very productive. Her friends frequently remark: "Jane, you certainly have a green thumb!"

- I **WHY** do Jane's friends think that she has a *green thumb*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is this a desirable ability? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the persons described below could be said to have a *green thumb*?
- a. A little boy who has just gotten a new puppy for his birthday
 - b. A woman who likes to spend her weekends at the beach
 - c. A husband who spends his evenings in the summer working in his garden to raise tomatoes, corn, and cucumbers
 - d. An elderly woman who takes great pride in her lovely rose garden
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *green thumb*.
I just don't seem to have much luck raising plants.
- V **WHEN** have you felt that you had a *green thumb*?



"My, you really do have a *green thumb*!"

4

GREEN WITH ENVY means *very envious, very jealous of*

IN CONTEXT

At first Phil's friends were glad about his new job. No one was jealous. In a few months he received a bigger salary, but still no one was envious. However, when, after one year, Phil received a promotion and his salary was doubled, nearly every one of his friends was green with envy. Some even wanted his job.

- I **WHY** are Phil's friends *green with envy*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is this a desirable attitude? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that someone could be *green with envy* of the persons in the following situations? Why or why not?
 - a. A woman who has to clean her dirty apartment
 - b. A young man who, at the age of 20, has become a famous movie star
 - c. A man who has a serious illness
 - d. A lawyer who has been appointed as a federal judge
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *green with envy*.

My friend wanted a car like mine so much that he could hardly contain himself.
- V **WHEN** was the last time you were *green with envy*?



PINK

(3 expressions)



1

PINK SLIP means a *discharge notice*

IN CONTEXT

"Paul doesn't work here anymore," said Bill. "He got a pink slip on Friday."

"Oh, that's too bad," Ralph remarked, "but he deserved to be fired after all the trouble he caused."

- I **WHY** did Paul get a *pink slip*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is a *pink slip* a good way to discharge an employee?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following received a pink slip?
 - a. A factory worker who was consistently late for work and who also was lazy
 - b. A teacher who is called the best in school by her students
 - c. A store manager whose store has been losing money for more than a year
 - d. An engineer who has failed to meet the requirements of a new job within the designated period of time
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *pink slip*.

When Larry got to work in the morning, he found a discharge notice in his mailbox, and he was greatly distressed.
- V **WHEN** did you ever receive a *pink slip*?

2

IN THE PINK means *the highest degree of excellence or perfection*

IN CONTEXT

The doctor examined Jim thoroughly and finally said: "You're in the pink of health!" To which Jim replied: "It must be because I take vitamins and exercise a lot."

- I **WHY** did Jim think that he was *in the pink*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do vitamins and exercise keep a person *in the pink*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are not *in the pink*?
- A nurse who has just finished working for 24 hours in a hospital and is exhausted
 - An old man who is 90 years of age but who still can swim, play golf, and take hikes in the country
 - A family that has been shipwrecked and has lived on an island for three months with only coconuts to eat
 - A famous boxer who has been training for his next championship fight for six weeks
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *in the pink*.
- After spending two weeks in the country, eating all that wonderful food, and helping with the work on the farm, I am in the best of health. I never felt better.
- V **WHEN** do you feel that you are *in the pink* with regard to your health?



TICKLED PINK means *exceedingly pleased; overjoyed*

IN CONTEXT

When the news came that she had won \$10,000 in a slogan contest, Mrs. Parker was tickled pink. She was so happy that she decided to telephone all her children to tell them.

- I **WHY** was Mrs. Parker *tickled pink*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are there many occasions in one's life when he or she is *tickled pink*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *tickled pink*?
- A family that has received a trip to Hawaii as the prize in a grocery store contest
 - A wounded soldier who is told by the doctor that his wound is not serious

- c. A university student who has failed the final examination in most of his courses
- d. A young woman who has been told by her boss that she is receiving a promotion on her job and a substantial increase in salary

IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *tickled pink*.

"Thank you for the diamond earrings," Martha told her husband.
"I'm so pleased I can hardly talk!"

V **WHEN** have things happened in your life to cause you to be *tickled pink*?



Marie was *tickled pink* and began to jump for joy.



PURPLE

(3 expressions)



1

BORN TO THE PURPLE means *high rank; imperial power*

IN CONTEXT

Oscar's way of conducting himself and his attitude toward people often gave the impression that he thought that he was born to the purple. He was proud, imperious, and utterly demanding. To say the least, he had few friends.

- I **WHY** did Oscar seem to be *born to the purple*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do many people act as if they were *born to the purple*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following really are *born to the purple*?
 - a. A descendant of a royal family
 - b. The janitor in a school
 - c. The great-great-grandson of the founder of a famous city
 - d. The daughter of the best doctor in town
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *born to the purple*.

Jason knew from childhood that he was of high rank because his family was the most influential and powerful in all of the region.
- V **WHEN** did you discover that you were *born to the purple*?



Just one look at Doug and one could tell that he was *born to the purple*.

2

PURPLE PASSION means *strong feeling*

IN CONTEXT

Lois is a person of strong likes and dislikes. She seems to express her feelings rather strongly at times. One of her favorite expressions is purple passion. She likes music, ice cream, and old movies with a purple passion, as she often says. She also hates housework, getting up early, and football with a purple passion. Lois expresses her opinions forcefully!

- I **WHY** is Lois a person who uses the expression, *purple passion*, a lot?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is "purple" a good color to describe "passion"? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following may be "guilty" of *purple passion*?
 - a. A man with a strong fear of flying
 - b. A person who is lazy
 - c. A woman who runs at the sight of a mouse
 - d. A boy who likes to fish
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *purple passion*.

After several weeks of eating the special dish that Mara prepared, Alfred began to get a strong feeling of dislike for it. He couldn't stand it any longer!
- V **WHEN** did you discover that you have a *purple passion* for something?

3

PURPLE PROSE means *elaborate and ornate language*

IN CONTEXT

The editor of the magazine called Malcolm into his office. "Malcolm," he said, "your article is very interesting but it is full of purple prose. You're going to have to rewrite it and use simple, straightforward language. Your writing style is too florid and you use too many ornate words!"

- I **WHY** did the editor think that Malcolm's article was full of *purple prose*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is purple prose hard to read and enjoy?
Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *purple prose* will appear in the following?
- a. A composition written by a junior high student
 - b. A doctor's prescription for some medicine
 - c. A law concerning smoking in restaurants
 - d. A eulogy written about a famous person
- IV **RESTATE** the following using the idiom, *purple prose*.
"After you correct the verbose and complicated language in your paper," the teacher said, "then I'll discuss it with you."
- V **WHEN** is *purple prose* a good way to write, if ever?



RED

(11 expressions)



1

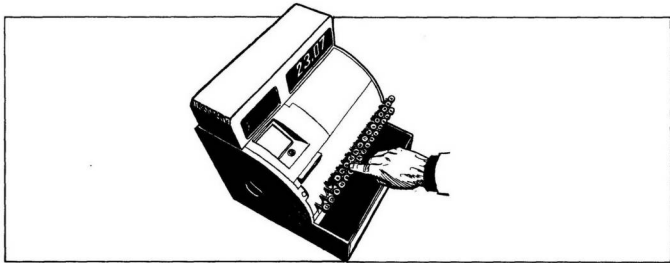
IN THE RED means *losing money*

IN CONTEXT

The annual budget of the company continued to show a deficit and it finally went out of business because it was always in the red. It appears that the owners did not have good business sense.

- I **WHY** was the company always *in the red*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, can families sometimes be *in the red*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following may be *in the red* or go *in the red*?
 - a. A company that continues to manufacture products that people no longer use
 - b. A bank that holds a large number of mortgages of people who have lost their jobs
 - c. A gold mining company that has just discovered a rich, new vein of gold
 - d. A drug company that has discovered a cure for cancer
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom *in the red*.

This is the second week that our accounts show that we are losing money.
We will have to initiate a strong program to get out of the red.
- V **WHEN** were you last *in the red* in your personal finances?



Sales are few and the store is *in the red*.

2

A RED CENT means a *copper penny having little value*

IN CONTEXT

"This is the most worthless piece of machinery I ever saw!" Steve declared. "It doesn't work at all. It's not worth a red cent."

- I **WHY** is the machinery not worth a *red cent*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are many things we buy not worth a *red cent*? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are not worth a *red cent*?
- a. A famous painting by Rembrandt
 - b. An old lamp that doesn't light
 - c. A broken pen
 - d. A gold watch that doesn't run
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, a *red cent*.
- I finally found the bracelet I lost, but it was so badly rusted that it was of little value.
- V **WHEN** did you discover that something you value highly is not worth a *red cent*?



A red cent

3

RED EYE means *strong, cheap whiskey*

IN CONTEXT

In the early days, on the western frontier, red eye was the common alcoholic drink found in most saloons. Over-consumption made the eyes red! Today, the term is applied in a unique way. Late night flights on regularly scheduled airlines are the Red Eye Special. Eyes made red from cheap whiskey and eyes made red from lack of sleep at night are still red eyes!

- I **WHY** was cheap whiskey called *red eye*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is *red eye* a good, descriptive term for strong, cheap whiskey?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following might be victims of too much *red eye*?
 - a. A six-month old baby awaking in the morning
 - b. A worker who has spent all night carousing with friends
 - c. A son has spent the night at the hospital with his sick father
 - d. A mother who has been sewing a wedding dress for her daughter
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *red eye*.

The doctor said: "The problem with your liver is caused by too much cheap whiskey."
- V **WHEN** did you last taste some *red eye*?

4

RED FLAG means *a sign of danger*

IN CONTEXT

As soon as the boss began to grip the edge of the desk, Andy recognized it as a red flag and kept his mouth shut. He knew from experience that to pursue the matter further would only lead to complications.

- I **WHY** did Andy pay attention to the *red flag*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are people always conscious of *red flags* in their dealings with others?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *red flags* may appear in the following situations?
- a. A teacher's displeasure with an unruly group of students
 - b. A policeman's attitude toward a motorist who is caught speeding
 - c. A store owner's reaction to an employee who habitually arrives late to work
 - d. A plumber's joy at finding the cause of the leak in a water pipe
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *red flag*.
- "You should have been more observant, Maxine said. "Alan's eyes, his tone of voice, and the way he gritted his teeth, were certainly signs of danger!"
- V **WHEN** do you most often display a *red flag*?

5

RED-HANDED means *in the act of committing a crime*

IN CONTEXT

As the thief was climbing out the window with the stolen necklace, the police were waiting for him and caught him red-handed because he was careless.

- I **WHY** did the police catch the thief *red-handed*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it easy to be caught *red-handed* when stealing something from a store?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following will be caught *red-handed*?
- a. A grandmother taking care of her small grandson
 - b. A boy taking an apple from a basket in a store
 - c. A man robbing a bank at 10 o'clock in the morning
 - d. A policeman driving around in his patrol car
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *red-handed*.
- The mystery of the disappearing ice cream was finally solved when they caught Sam in the act of eating a whole gallon at midnight.

V **WHEN** did someone catch you *red-handed*



The police caught him *red-handed*.

6

RED HOT means *exceedingly hot; enthusiastic or excited; quite skillful*

IN CONTEXT

"Our team is red hot," shouted the enthusiastic students. And the red hot support of the fans seemed to spur the team on even more. Even the atmosphere of the gymnasium felt as if it, too, was red hot!

- I **WHY** did the students think their team was *red hot*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is enthusiasm that is *red hot* always a good thing?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following may be or become *red hot*?
- a. A stove that is constantly being filled with firewood
 - b. A basketball player who repeatedly misses shots at the basket
 - c. A crowd attending a political rally
 - d. A prisoner in jail
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *red hot*.
- "Don't touch that piece of metal!" Phil yelled. "It's very, very hot."
- V **WHEN** were you last a *red hot* supporter of something or someone?

7

RED-LETTER DAY means a *very happy day*

IN CONTEXT

Tuesday was a red-letter day for Roscoe. He closed a big business deal and thereby earned a fee of \$20,000.

- I **WHY** was Tuesday a *red-letter day* for Roscoe.
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, should every day be a *red-letter day*?
Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *red-letter days*?
- The day a shipping company receives the news that two of its ships have sunk
 - The day a young woman receives the news that she has been chosen as the beauty queen of her home state
 - The day a professor is told that his first book will be published
 - The day a banker gets a note demanding ransom for his son who has been kidnapped
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *red-letter day*.
This is a very happy day for me. I received a check in the mail for my latest magazine article.
- V **WHEN** was your last *red-letter day*?



Joe Grimes leaned back in his chair and reflected: "It's been a *red-letter day*."

8

RED NECK means a poor, white Southern farmer in the U.S. [It is frequently used to imply an ignorant or illiterate person.]

IN CONTEXT

"What does that newspaper mean by calling that group of protesters, red necks?

"I suppose the writer wants to suggest that they are ignorant and incapable of thinking straight."

"Well, I don't like it! My brother, who's a college graduate, was a member of the group!"

- I **WHY** is the group called *red necks*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are there "*red necks*" in most countries?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following would be called *red necks*?
 - a. The chairman of the chemistry department at the state university
 - b. A group of workers protesting the rise in cost of food
 - c. A group of elderly people protesting the rise in rent at their apartment building
 - d. Ten thousand farmers gathered at the state capital building to protest the low prices of farm products
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *red neck*.
Whenever my mother gets angry at my father, who was raised on a farm, she calls him a dumb farmer.
- V **WHEN** do you use the term, *red neck*?

9

RED TAPE means the excessive use of official forms and procedures to obstruct progress

IN CONTEXT

Two months ago Tina sent in her job application to the central office of the state government. There is so much red tape in the processing of her application that it will be another month before it will be completed. Tina is desperate! Last night she complained to her parents: "Why is there so much red tape when a person needs to get something important done?"

- I **WHY** has *red tape* made Tina desperate?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is *red tape* a rather common thing in most societies?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *red tape* will play a role in the following situations?
- A doctor who wants to get a license to practice medicine in a certain country
 - A boy who wants to borrow his friend's bicycle
 - A housewife who wants to buy some new furniture
 - A truck driver who wants to pay a fine that he received for a traffic violation
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *red tape*.
- We finally gave up trying to get a permit to build a house in that town because there were so many obstructions to getting all the documents that we needed.
- V **WHEN** did you last have to suffer from a lot of *red tape*?

10

ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET means to welcome with great hospitality or ceremony

IN CONTEXT

After the war Jim returned to his home town a hero. The people of the town gathered to meet him at the bus station and rolled out the red carpet.

- I **WHY** did the people of the town roll out the red carpet for Jim?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it necessary to roll out the red carpet for heroes? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that people would roll out the red carpet for some of the following?
- The President of the country
 - A famous movie star
 - A dog that saved the life of a small child
 - The president of a company making roller skates

- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *roll out the red carpet*.

When our best friends come to visit, we nearly always welcome them with great hospitality.

- V **WHEN** did someone *roll out the red carpet* for you?



(TO) SEE RED means to *be very angry*

IN CONTEXT

"Everytime you say that word," Clarice said, "I get so angry! I see red!"
"Yes, I know," Ed replied. "You have a hard time controlling your temper."

- I **WHY** does Clarice *see red*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, how can people avoid *seeing red*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following situations would cause one to *see red*?
- A child carelessly knocks a glass of milk over. It spills over the table and falls on the rug. His mother is present.
 - Two people are talking and begin to joke about each other's way of dress. The comments start to become somewhat sharp and personally critical.
 - A father comes downstairs early for breakfast one morning, and discovers that someone has stolen the television set, the silverware, and broken the dining room window.
 - A couple engaged to be married is discussing the date for their wedding, the names of the guests to be invited, the place of the wedding, and the reception to follow.
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *to see red*.
- Whenever anyone begins to make critical remarks about my country, I get very angry.
- V **WHEN** did something or someone recently cause you to *see red*?



ROSE

(2 expressions)



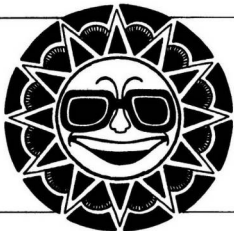
ROSE-COLORED GLASSES means *cheerfully; optimistically*

IN CONTEXT

Brenda's friends often became impatient and sometimes angry with her constant good humor. She always seemed to see only the good side of things. Her friends accused her of seeing the world unrealistically through rose-colored glasses.

- I **WHY** did Brenda's friends accuse her of seeing the world through *rose-colored glasses*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it a sign of weakness or strength to see things through *rose-colored glasses*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following see the world through *rose-colored glasses*?
 - a. A wife who never becomes discouraged by her husband's inability to get and keep a good job
 - b. A father who repeatedly encourages his son and refuses to admit that the son is a failure
 - c. A grandmother who finds her granddaughter to be inconsistent and evasive in speaking the truth
 - d. A son who dislikes his father, his father's job, and his father's advice
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *rose-colored glasses*.

"I almost never feel sad," Mary remarked.
"I always try to see the bright side of things and not complain."
- V **WHEN** do you most often see things through *rose-colored glasses*?



Rose-colored glasses.

2

ROSY means *bright; cheerful; optimistic*

IN CONTEXT

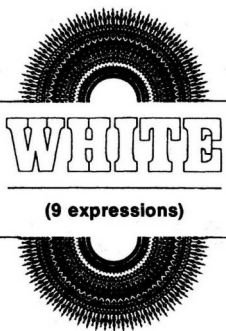
"Don't get your hopes too high," her mother remarked. "Things may look rosy today, but tomorrow's another day."

"I know, Mother," Yvonne answered, "but as long as things look rosy, I'm going to enjoy it!"

- I **WHY** does Yvonne's mother warn her not get her hopes too high?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it better to be optimistic most of the time rather than pessimistic? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following offer a *rosy* outlook?
 - a. A chance to spend a vacation with friends and relatives at a famous beach resort
 - b. An opportunity to sing with a famous rock n'roll band
 - c. A possibility of becoming the number one cashier at the bank
 - d. A chance to go on a long trip into the wilderness of a largely unexplored region of the country
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *rosy*.
Hal is young, energetic, intelligent and has a bright future ahead of him.
- V **WHEN** were things the *rosiest* in your life?



Everything's *rosy*!



WHITE

(9 expressions)

1

WHITE AS A SHEET means *pale; bloodless*

IN CONTEXT

When they told Nella that her father's plane was missing in a flight from Seattle to Tokyo, she turned white as a sheet and began to cry.

"Oh!" she moaned. "The plane's probably crashed in the ocean."

- I **WHY** does Nella turn *white as a sheet* and begin to cry?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do people really become *white as a sheet* in times of pain or distress?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following happenings would cause someone to become *white as a sheet*?
 - a. The news of a disastrous hotel fire in a distant city
 - b. The news of a rise in the price of milk
 - c. The news of a possible labor strike at a newspaper
 - d. The news of serious illness within a family
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *white as a sheet*.

Phil's face first turned red and then quite pale when he realized the importance and significance of the report.
- V **WHEN** did something happen to you to cause you to turn *white as a sheet*?

2

WHITE-COLLAR WORKER means *people whose work does not involve manual labor*

IN CONTEXT

Doctors, lawyers, bankers, and people who work in offices are called white-collar workers. Unlike blue-collar workers, they do not work with their hands and usually wear clothes that are stylish, such as suits, shirts, ties, dresses, etc., rather than work clothes made from denim or similar fabric.

- I **WHY** are lawyers, doctors, and bankers called *white-collar workers*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is the term, *white-collar worker*, a good, descriptive one?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following could be called *white-collar workers*.
- a. A farmer
 - b. A government secretary
 - c. A dentist
 - d. A truck driver
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *white-collar worker*.
- All of the people who work in the office of that company get a holiday tomorrow but the other employees have to work.
- V **WHEN** were you ever a *white-collar worker*?



WHITE ELEPHANT means *a possession that is no longer wanted by its owner, often because it is useless, expensive, or troublesome to maintain*

IN CONTEXT

The Chandlers finally sold their summer house at the beach. The house was so big and cost so much to maintain that it became a white elephant for them. They really couldn't afford it any longer.

- I **WHY** was the Chandler's house considered to be a *white elephant*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do most people have *white elephants* of some kind?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are or may become *white elephants*?
- a. A large statue of a famous explorer
 - b. A swimming pool in a desert
 - c. An ornately decorated house built by an eccentric old woman
 - d. A collection of gold coins
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *white elephant*.
- "I don't see why you insist on keeping that old yacht." Mother insisted to

Father. "It's utterly useless, and besides the upkeep is very expensive."

V **WHEN** did you last get rid of a *white elephant*?

4

WHITE FLAG means a *sign of surrender or truce*

IN CONTEXT

The discussion became quite heated at times but, finally, the opposition raised the white flag and said that they were willing to compromise. An agreement was quickly reached because the opposition was convinced by what the chairman had said.

I **WHY** did the opposition raise the *white flag*?

II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is raising the *white flag* a sign of weakness or cowardice? Give your reasons.

III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following situations will be resolved by a *white flag*?

- An engaged couple arguing about the date of their wedding
- A baker preparing three different kinds of bread
- A committee assigned the job of planning a holiday parade
- A government worker waiting for a shipment of paper

IV **RESTATE** the following sentences using the idiom, *white flag*.

"I raise the question of justice," Murray said. "One of us will have to offer a sign of surrender or a truce or we won't accomplish anything."

V **WHEN** is a *white flag* a good idea?

5

WHITE HEAT means *extremely great heat; state of great activity, excitement, or feeling*

IN CONTEXT

"My sister is one of these very active, emotional persons," Clay observed. "She's always moving at a fast pace, in a white heat, so to speak."

"I know what you mean," Lloyd responded. "My brother's that way, too. He does things in such a white heat that I think he's going to burn up!"

- I **WHY** does Clay's sister move in a *white heat*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it good to do things in a *white heat*?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *white heat* can be used to describe some of the following.
 - a. A soccer coach during an intense game
 - b. A doctor during an emergency operation
 - c. A nuclear explosion
 - d. An iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean
- IV **RESTATE** the following using the idiom, *white heat*.

The sun's rays beat down on our heads with an intense, insufferable heat.
- V **WHEN** are you sometimes caught up in a *white heat* of activity?

6

WHITE LIE means a *diplomatic untruth, told with good intentions*.

IN CONTEXT

My mother is a person who believes that one can avoid problems with other people sometimes by not telling them the whole truth. She feels that it helps to avoid friction and bad feelings between people. As she often says: "A little white lie never hurts anybody, and besides, the truth sometimes hurts!"

- I **WHY** does my mother believe in the value of a *white lie*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, are *white lies* always justified? Give reasons for your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that someone may tell a *white lie* in the following circumstances?
 - a. A teenager who arrives home from a date at three o'clock in the morning
 - b. A doctor whose patient has just died
 - c. A lawyer who has not ever won a case in court

- d. A newspaper reporter whose supervisor questions the veracity of an article he has written

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *white lie*.

Sam thought that it would be wise to tell an untruth as diplomatically as possible to avoid a quarrel with Marvin.

V **WHEN** did you ever have the need to tell a *white lie*?

7

WHITE PAPER means a *paper issued by the government to justify its position in some matter of international interest*

IN CONTEXT

The first thing Donald had to do in his new job was to prepare a white paper explaining the government's position concerning the crisis overseas. People were so worried that his office was getting nearly 300 telephone calls a day.

- I **WHY** was a *white paper* necessary?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, do *white papers* deal with issues in a satisfying manner? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following could cause the need for a *white paper*?
- a. An increase in the rates of an international hotel chain
 - b. A crisis in the supply of food for refugees
 - c. A problem between two governments regarding tariffs on imports
 - d. A dispute between two countries regarding the common border
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *white paper*.
- The Office of Foreign Affairs finally issued a formal statement to all newspapers and radio and television stations concerning the incident.
- V **WHEN** did you ever see a *white paper*?

8

WHITE TIE means *formal evening clothes for a man and determines the dress code for a woman at a formal social function*

IN CONTEXT

The invitation clearly stated that the event would be formal, white tie, that is. As a result, Marian had to buy new evening wear at an exclusive shop for women's clothes.

- I **WHY** did the *white tie* event affect Marian?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is *white tie* a relatively common way of dress?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following would require *white tie*?
 - a. A Boy Scout picnic
 - b. A dinner party at the home of a millionaire
 - c. The opening night performance of a play on Broadway in New York
 - d. A family dinner to celebrate a birthday
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *white tie*.
When I asked, they told me that formal evening wear was necessary.
- V **WHEN** do you dress in *white tie*?

9

WHITEWASH means *to conceal or cover over mistakes or failures*

IN CONTEXT

The company was in a difficult situation. It had suffered severe financial losses during the year. Instead of telling the truth about the problems it faced, the directors of the company decided to whitewash the facts and to keep the public from hearing the truth.

- I **WHY** did the directors *whitewash* the facts about the company?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is it a good thing to *whitewash* facts to protect oneself?

III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that the facts may have been *whitewashed* in the following situations?

- a. A husband who has lost considerable money gambling and whose wife asks him to account for a missing \$500
- b. A student who explains to his parents why he failed an important test at school
- c. A banker who explains to bank customers the reason for a sharp rise in interest rates
- d. A small child who wants to go to play at her best friend's house

IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *whitewash*.

By never speaking of his mistakes with the money he invested, Ted was able to mislead a lot of people into thinking that he was rich.

V **WHEN** did you ever have to *whitewash* the facts?



YELLOW

(3 expressions)



1

(TO) BE YELLOW, HAVE A YELLOW STREAK means *cowardly*

IN CONTEXT

When Ted refused to fight, the other boys began to taunt him:
"You're yellow, afraid to fight. You've got a yellow streak down your back a mile wide!"

- I **WHY** is Ted accused of being *yellow*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is one who refuses to fight, *yellow*? Give your reasons.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following are *yellow*?
 - a. A man fearful of riding in airplanes
 - b. A woman who does not like to leave her apartment at night alone
 - c. A dog that runs away when it sees another dog coming
 - d. A boy who has snakes as pets
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idioms *to be yellow* or *to have a yellow streak*.

"Jack is so cowardly," Don shouted, "that he is afraid to stand up for his rights! He won't even speak up a little bit!"
- V **WHEN** were you last in a situation in which people thought that you had a *yellow streak*?

2

YELLOW-DOG means *cowardly*

IN CONTEXT

"Why were you two boys fighting?" the school principal asked in a severe tone.
"Well," said one, "he called me yellow-dog!"
"Is that true?" questioned the principal.
"Yeah. 'Course he is a coward. Too yellow to fight like a man!"

- I **WHY** did one boy call the other *yellow-dog*?

- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is *yellow-dog* a good descriptive term for a coward?
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that *yellow-dog* may apply to some of the following?
- a. A paratrooper landing behind enemy lines
 - b. A husband who's afraid of his wife
 - c. A three-year old child afraid of the dark
 - d. A teenage girl fearful of walking alone at night
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *yellow-dog*.
- "Cowardly, I'm not," Jan protested. "Careful or fearful, I am, in such a situation."
- V **WHEN** were you ever called *yellow-dog*?

3

YELLOW JOURNALISM means *exaggerated, sensational news*

IN CONTEXT

"That story just can't be true! John exclaimed." It's greatly exaggerated just to create an impression of crises. I call it yellow journalism!"

- I **WHY** does John believe that the story is *yellow journalism*?
- II **IN YOUR OPINION**, is much of today's writing for newspapers and magazines *yellow journalism*? Explain your answer.
- III **IS IT POSSIBLE** that some of the following is *yellow journalism*?
- a. A newspaper article reporting on a murder, giving lurid details, and quoting a number of witnesses of the crime
 - b. A magazine article reporting briefly and factually recent developments in cancer research
 - c. A financial report from a large, international bank
 - d. A booklet describing in strong terms and great detail the injustices of the management of a large corporation and making an emotional plea for support of those unfairly treated
- IV **RESTATE** the following sentence using the idiom, *yellow journalism*.
- That newspaper is famous for its partly true, exaggerated and sensational

news stories.

- V **WHEN** did you last read something that you thought was *yellow journalism*?



"Do you think this article in the paper sounds like *yellow journalism*? Jane asked.

