Lesson One

Outgoing

i. (Sociable, open and friendly, not shy—*not to be confused with “outgoings”, which means personal or business expenses such as rent and domestic bills)

Examples:

- **Job Advertisement:**
  
  *Outgoing* Sales Assistant required. Must be on the ball and capable of taking on hectic work schedule.

- In the long run, you’ll pick up more clients if you adopt a more *outgoing* attitude.

- The place needed doing up, but it wasn’t that which put us off going for it: the *outgoings* were outrageous.

ii. (Used to describe someone who is about to retire from a high position, e.g. president, chairman)

Example:

- Virtually the whole town turned out to see off the *outgoing* president; they weren’t particularly looking forward to meeting the new one.

iii. (A collection of mail which is to be sent, rather than “incoming”, which has just been received)

Example:

- I’m sorry to be bossy, but letters which are to go off should be put in the ‘*outgoing*’ tray.

Off the record (Unofficially, “Don’t tell anybody I said this, but…”, not to be made public—*note the opposite “on record”, which means official, a publicly known fact*)

Examples:

- **Mortgage Consultant:**

  You could wind up paying higher interest.

  *Off the record*, I reckon you’d be better off going to your own bank rather than one of my clients.

- Before we get things under way, I must stress that anything that comes up during this meeting must be kept strictly *off the record*.

- **Interviewer to Prime Minister:**

  I’m not trying to catch you out, but you are *on record* as saying that inflation would plummet once we had recovered from the slump.
To go by

i. (To rely on/ judge something by what one has heard, seen or read --often used in the negative--note also “to go by the book”, which means to stick to the rules)
Examples:
• You can’t go by what he comes out with; you need to seek a specialist who caters for experienced professionals.
• I never go by the tabloid press; mind you, this latest scandal is quite an eye-opener. The outgoing mayor had clearly been up to something.
• We do try to go by the book in this company, but, off the record, the odd rule gets broken from time to time.

ii. (To pass--used for time only)
Examples:
• As time goes by, I feel we’re drifting apart.
• Five years went by without me hearing from him, and then out of the blue, he turned up at the house.

To baffle (To confuse, puzzle)
Examples:
• Computers really baffle me; I’m not cut out for the modern age at all.
• I was baffled by her behaviour. What do you think came over her?

Hardship (A state or period of suffering caused by a lack of money, a sacrifice--generally experienced when having to give up something pleasant)
Examples:
• We had to put up with far worse hardships when we were children, so don’t make out you’re hard-done by.
• I could do without biscuits quite happily, but cutting out chocolate would definitely be a hardship.
**To be in one’s element** (To feel comfortable in a certain situation, to enjoy doing something because it is exactly right and suitable for that person)

Examples:
- As an outgoing person, I’m **in my element** when I have to make a speech off the top of my head in front of a crowd of people.
- She dropped out of her business course and has now **taken up** a fine arts degree. She’s really **in her element** now.

"Computers really baffle me; I’m not cut out for the modern age at all.” (see page 2)

**To brush up** (To improve one’s knowledge on a particular subject, to revise)

Examples:
- I thought I could get by in Spanish, but as it turned out, I needed to do quite a bit of **brushing up**.
- You’d better **brush up** on your general knowledge before putting yourself down for the college quiz.

**Touchy** (Over-sensitive, easily upset or annoyed. A subject which is likely to upset someone)

Examples:
- Just because I had a go at you last night, there’s no need to be so **touchy**.
- A: Jane’s very **touchy**, but her sister is quite thick-skinned.
  B: Oh, I wouldn’t go along with that at all.
  It’s the other way around!
- It’s a very **touchy** subject; I wouldn’t bring it up if I were you.
**Cliché** (An expression, viewpoint or idea which has been used so many times that it has become boring and has lost its effect—*this is a French word which, like many others, has come into everyday English usage*)

Examples:
- It's unheard of for the manager of a football team not to come out with the same old *clichés*.
- I know it's a *cliché*, but what you get out of this life depends on what you put into it.

**To lay out**

i. (To present something in a clear way, to arrange things so that they can be easily seen)
Examples:
- It’s imperative that we *lay out* our main proposals in the booklet, otherwise the message might not come across.
- If you *lay* everything *out* on the table, it will be easier to sort out what papers are worth keeping.

ii. (To design, plan a building, town, etc—*note the noun “layout”, which is the way in which something is designed or arranged*)
Examples:
- The garden is clearly *laid out* in my mind. The only drawback is that I know I’ll never get round to doing anything about it.
- In her latest job they’ve asked her to take on the responsibility of *laying out* the new town centre. She will be in her element.
- The lack of light can be put down to the poor *layout* of the building.
- I’m not keen on the *layout* of the follow-up brochure; it’s bound to baffle many of our customers.

iii. (To pay for something/spend a lot of money reluctantly—see “*to fork/shell out*”, *Practical Everyday English* page 168) **Colloquial**
Examples:
- Wife to husband:
  *If your car has got so much going for it, why have we had to *lay out* £1,000 before it’s even got through its first six months?*
- Your brother is always making out that he’s had a life of hardship, but quite frankly, I’m fed up with having to *lay out* for him.
Chapter One

Lesson Two

To go about

i. (To approach/deal with a problem or situation in a particular way—often used with “how”)

Examples:
• Even though I’ve been running my own business for quite a long while now, I still haven’t got a clue as to how to go about giving someone the sack.
• It seems to be a sensible way of going about it; mind you, it baffles me as to why it has taken this long to get things under way.

ii. (To circulate—often used with “rumour” or a non-life-threatening virus)

Examples:
• There’s a rumour going about—strictly off the record of course—that more redundancies are in the pipeline.
• A: I think I’m coming down with something.
  B: You’ve probably picked up the flu bug that’s going about at the moment.

Loophole (A gap or mistake in a particular law/rule which allows people to avoid having to obey it)

Examples:
• Our solicitor is bound to find a loophole enabling us to get round the law.
• Interviewer to politician:
  You’re on record as saying that people have got away with murder for far too long and that the obvious loopholes in the law must be tightened up.

To keep someone posted (To keep someone up-to-date with the news/what is going on)

Examples:
• All the amendments are clearly laid out in this document, but we’ll keep you posted on anything else which crops up.
• If you had kept me posted instead of dithering around, we wouldn’t have had all this mess to sort out.
To break even (Not to make a profit or a loss)

Examples:
• We reckoned that we’d just about break even in the first year, but, as it turned out, business really took off.
• I know it’s a cliché, but during a slump you should count yourself lucky if you can break even.

Backlog (A large amount of work which has been building up over a period of time, a lot of people waiting to be dealt with or seen)

Examples:
• I’ve got a backlog of paperwork to get through before I can turn my mind to these other issues.
• There’s a backlog of people to see, but, off the record, if you turn up before nine, we should be able to fit you in.

To rub someone up the wrong way (To irritate/annoy someone)

Examples:
• Perhaps I’m being too touchy, but there’s something about that man that rubs me up the wrong way.
• He really knows how to rub her up the wrong way. Why does she stand for it?

To come through

i. (To pull through/survive a difficult period of time, to progress through a training period)

Examples:
• We had to put up with a lot of hardships during our time in the army but we all came through it in the end.
• Football coach:
  Our star players have not been up to scratch this season; mind you, we’ve got quite a number of youngsters coming through.

ii. (To be evident/apparent)

Examples:
• What came through most of all was his reluctance to come to terms with the truth.
• His nasty streak only comes through when he’s being rubbed up the wrong way.
iii.  (to arrive after having been processed—usually documents)

Examples:
- We can’t put out these brochures until the new lease comes through.
- The Home Office have told me that because of a backlog of applications, my visa is unlikely to come through until the new year.

“Our star players have not been up to scratch this season; mind you, we’ve got quite a number of youngsters coming through.”
(see page 6)

To give someone (a lot of) stick, to get/take (a lot of) stick  (To tease, make fun of, criticise continually, to be teased, criticised continually—note also “to come in for stick”, which can be used in the same way as “to take stick”) Colloquial

Examples:
- We give him a lot of stick at work over his appalling choice of ties, but he is too thick-skinned to let it bother him.
- I got relentless stick last time I went in for the marathon, so I am not putting my name down for it this year.
- Film critic appearing on television: I’ve taken quite a bit of stick this week from viewers for slagging off Dustin Hoffman’s latest film, so I’m going to steer clear of the matter on tonight’s programme.
- The Board of Directors came in for a lot of stick over the way they handled such a touchy issue.
To be up in the air (To be uncertain/unsettled)

Examples:
• A: How’s your new office coming along?
  B: Everything’s up in the air at the moment; I haven’t got a clue what’s going on.
• We’ve sorted out the costings, but the layout is all up in the air.

Dogsbody (A person who is employed to do menial jobs only)

Examples:
• I’m sorry, but I won’t let you get away with treating me like your dogsbody any more.
• Initially, he was taken on just as a general dogsbody, which is why no-one can get over his promotion to Regional Manager.
Chapter One
Lesson Three

To go round

i. (To go to someone’s home—see “to go over”, Practical Everyday English, page 12, meaning i)
Example:
• I’m going round to John’s to give him some stick about his team losing the Cup Final. That will really rub him up the wrong way.

ii. (To socialise/go out with a person or people on a regular basis—generally used by children and young adults) Colloquial
Examples:
• I don’t really go around/round with my college friends these days; we’ve drifted apart in recent years.
• One child to another:
  I know we get on well with each other, but my mum has told me that I’m not allowed to go around with you any more.

iii. (To spread, to get round—see Practical Everyday English, page 167, meaning ii—, to go about—see earlier, page 5, meaning ii)
Examples:
• The stories that went round about these two guys were a real eye-opener.
• There’s a stomach bug going round the school at the moment, so many of our kids are feeling a bit under the weather.

iv. (To be in the habit of doing something or to behave in a certain way which is generally disapproved of)
Examples:
• If you go round deliberately winding everyone up, people are bound to get hold of the wrong end of the stick.
• I don’t go round treating my employees like dogsbodies, and I don’t expect you to try it on either.

v. To have a sufficient quantity of something for everyone to enjoy/use—often used with “enough” or “plenty”)
Examples:
• In the past we took it for granted that there was always enough money to go round, but these days it’s a wonder that we can afford to do anything at all.
• I thought we had run out of brochures, but, as it turned out, there are plenty to go round.
One child to another: “I know we get on well with each other, but my mum has told me that I’m not allowed to go around/round with you any more.”

(see page 9)

**To have it in one** (To possess a certain characteristic which one was not previously aware of—often used with “I didn’t know”. Note also the colloquial expression **“to have it in for someone”**, which means to be determined that someone will suffer, have a hard time or fail in some way, often for no apparent reason. It is not generally used in the first person; i.e. one would not say “I’ve got it in for him”, although one might hear, “He thinks I’ve got it in for him”)

Examples:

- She’s not normally so outgoing; I never believed she **had it in her** to perform in front of such a big audience.
- John can vouch for my usual calm, easy-going nature. I didn’t know I **had it in me** to fly off the handle like that.
- I might as well give in my notice; the boss **has had it in for me** ever since I told him he was highly strung.
• Every application I’ve made has been turned down. **Someone has clearly got it in for me!**

**Cocky** (Too confident or sure that one knows everything) **Colloquial**

Examples:
• One day I’m going to show her up in front of her friends. I won’t stand for her cocky attitude any longer.
• It served him right when she cut him down to size. He’s far too cocky for his own good.
• He comes over as too cocky. I don’t think he’ll fit in with the other members of staff.

**To bog down/to get bogged down** (To prevent progress, to confuse people by giving them too much work or information, to get stuck/to be slowed down, often because of too much work)

Examples:
• We’ve got to get our marketing spot-on and not bog potential customers down with too much information.
• I’m sorry I didn’t get back to you yesterday but I got bogged down with a backlog of paperwork I had to catch up on.

**Understatement** (A statement which does not go far enough or is not as strong as it should be -- **the opposite of exaggeration**)

Examples:
• To say that my French is not up to scratch is an understatement.
• A: Our team didn’t put up much of a fight today.
  B: That must be the understatement of the year. They were absolutely dreadful!

**Up and coming** (Someone/something who/which is new and likely to be successful/popular in the near future)

Examples:
• I feel most of the old directors are no longer on the ball; mind you, we’ve got one or two up and coming youngsters on the board who could pull us through this bad patch.
• A: What’s up and coming in the fashion world at the moment?
  B: I haven’t got a clue; I drifted away from that scene ages ago.
To get going

i. (To get a move on—see Practical Everyday English, page 183, to hurry up and leave/start, to get something started—note that “to get a move on” is preferred to “to get going” for use in the imperative—see 3rd example below.)

Colloquial

Examples:
• I’m not trying to drop you a hint, but you’d better get going if you want to dodge the rush hour traffic.
• Let’s get this meeting going before we wind up having to stay the night here.
• Get a move on! We’ll never clear this backlog at this rate.

ii. (To become or make something more lively, e.g. a party) Colloquial

Examples:
• A: I might have known you’d turn up late!
  B: Oh sorry, but we thought the party wouldn’t really get going until midnight.
• We could have done with a live band to get the wedding reception going but we had to make do with background classical music instead.

iii. (To wind up—see Practical Everyday English, page 147, meaning iv, to tease)

Colloquial

Example:
• It’s so easy to get your brother going: I never knew he was so touchy.

To pencil someone/something in (To make a provisional [something which could be changed later] appointment with someone)

Examples:
• I tell you what; I’ll pencil you in for Tuesday the 18th, and in the meantime I’d appreciate it if you could keep me posted as to what’s likely to come up before then.
• Things are a little up in the air at the moment. If you pencil the meeting in for Wednesday, I’ll get back to you before packing up tonight on whether I can make it or not.

At stake (At risk—often money or one’s reputation)

Examples:
• Lawyer to Client:
  I’m sorry to be blunt, but it’s not worth putting my career at stake over such a borderline case.
• Has it dawned on you exactly how much money is at stake here?

Scapegoat (A person who is unfairly blamed for everything that has gone wrong in order to satisfy public anger--often used with the verb “to make”)

Examples:
• It’s unfair to make the Chancellor the scapegoat for the downturn in the economy; the entire Government has got a lot to answer for.
• The police came off very badly in this case, having dithered for what seems an eternity, and now they are looking for a scapegoat.
INTERVIEW WITH FOOTBALL MANAGER TED DAVIES

INTERVIEWER: Good afternoon, Ted. Welcome to the show.

DAVIES: Thanks very much, I’m delighted to be here.

INTERVIEWER: Let me start by asking you a few background questions. Is it true that you were first taken on by Winchester United as a dogsbody?

DAVIES: Well, that’s quite right. As a youngster, I used to go round with the chairman’s son, and one day his father offered me the job of cleaning the players’ boots. All the guys today give me a lot of stick about it. But I was a cocky lad even then. I knew I had it in me to climb the ladder. I always felt in my element at this club.

INTERVIEWER: Many people are baffled as to why you never made it as a regular first team player. You are on record as saying that you were occasionally played out of position.

DAVIES: That must be the understatement of the year. I only ever featured as a defender, which really rubbed me up the wrong way, since I was a gifted winger. The problem was, I didn’t know how to go about adapting to new positions.

INTERVIEWER: In today’s team you seem to have a lot of young players coming through. How do you encourage them?

DAVIES: I try not to bog them down with technicalities. Some of them are quite touchy when I have a go at them for something. Others need a lot of pushing to get them going. I know it’s a cliché, but they will all have to go through a lot of hardship before they get to the top.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks for your time. Good luck for the championship.
NEWSREADER: Good evening. This is the six o’clock news. Today the outgoing Home Secretary denied reports that the backlog of passport applications has caused millions of holidaymakers to miss their flights. He said, “You cannot go by the scare stories of the press. Everything is under control.” However, a spokesman for the Travellers’ Bureau said, “There’s a rumour going about that the Prime Minister has admitted, off the record, that all decisions as to how to solve the problem have been left up in the air.” We will, of course, keep all listeners posted.

In other news, Members of Parliament (MPs) have been told to brush up on their European languages. There has been a survey conducted in the House of Commons questioning new members on their foreign language abilities. What came through most of all was that only a few of the up and coming politicians could get by in a foreign tongue. Some of these were even proficient enough to find loopholes in European legislation written in French. However, the majority of MPs only spoke English, and struggled with basic grammar and punctuation even in their own language. They were urged to pencil in dates for language tuition courses. The Minister for European Affairs warned the House that there was a lot at stake in Europe, and that we couldn’t afford to be able to converse in only one language.
Chapter One: Exercise

CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD FROM THOSE IN RED
Answers on page 133

1. I don’t think he had anything to do with what happened. They used him as a (scapegoat/dogsbody/loophole/cliché) just because he’s the office b (scapegoat/dogsbody/backlog/cocky).

2. You can’t a (come through/go by/go around/bog down) what he says; he has never experienced any form of b (cliché/loophole/backlog/hardship) in his entire life.

3. You are a (on record/off the record/bogged down/at stake) as saying that he is the best of the b (understated/cocky/outgoing/up and coming) footballers, even though he’s had an appalling season so far. Be prepared to c (lay out/break even/get a lot of stick/get going) from the viewers of this show.

4. I didn’t think you a (laid out/were in your element/had it in you/were so baffled) to be so nasty. You really b (got going/rubbed him up the wrong way/kept him posted/pencilled him in).

5. Last year was a hard time in our business when we weren’t a (breaking even/in our element/going around/brushing up), but look how things have picked up so dramatically this year. I don’t know how we b (went about/got going/went around/came through) such a difficult patch.

6. I will a (come through/go by/pencil you in/get going) for Thursday, but I do have a b (cliché/backlog/loophole/dogsbody) of paperwork to catch up on. I’ve allowed myself to get a bit c (bogged down/up in the air/touchy/loopholed) with it all.

7. a (On record/Off the record/At stake/Coming through), the Prime Minister has admitted that there is not much he can do about the b (backlogs/scapegoats/understatements/loopholes) in the law which allow criminals to get away with murder…sometimes literally, but he keeps telling journalists that he is c (baffled/bogged down/on record/outgoing) as to why the previous government did nothing about it.

8. You say he is a (dogsbody/scapegoat/outgoing/up in the air). That’s a bit of an b (off the record/loophole/cliché/understatement). He’s a big c (cocky/touchy/bogged down/laid out) show-off!

9. He’ll be a (kept posted/baffled/in his element/touchy) at the party with all those pretentious academics coming out with all the usual b (layouts/dogsbody/clichés/backlogs). But don’t tell him I said that; you know how c (cocky/touchy/baffled/bogged down) he can be.

10. There’s a rumour a (going round/coming through/breaking even/up and coming) the office that you’re not very keen on the new b (understatement/layout/backlog/cliché) of the building I have proposed.
11. It’s all a bit *(at stake/outgoing/off the record/up in the air)* at the moment. I’ll *(rub you up the wrong way/give you stick/keep you posted/get you bogged down)* and let you know how things proceed.

12. There’s an awful lot *(at stake/in our element/up and coming/of dogsbodies)* here. It’s clear that we’re all going to need to *(give a lot of stick/brush up/go round/come through)* on our negotiating skills if we’re going to succeed.

13. I don’t really know how to *(go around/go about/come through/get going)* telling him our relationship is over…but I’d better *(pencil him in/rub him up the wrong way/get going/go about)* if I’m going to catch him before his train leaves.