

vocabulary

idioms

- 1 a For each of 1–15, study the context and discuss the meaning of the idiom in italics.
- As the job's going so well, please don't *rock the boat* by suggesting we change our plans now.
 - He's getting excellent marks in all school subjects, so at the moment he's *on the crest of a wave*.
 - I'm sorry to hear you broke up with your boyfriend, but don't worry, *there are plenty more fish in the sea*.
 - We had a fantastic day out at the seaside; everybody *had a whale of a time*.
 - Emily, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, *felt like a fish out of water* at the formal dinner.
 - You should take advantage of the opportunity now; otherwise you'll *miss the boat*.
 - Although she could prove he'd told lies, she *let him off the hook* by not saying a word to anyone.
 - Realising she wanted to make me angry, I kept calm and didn't *take the bait*.
 - They'll be *in hot water* if the security guards catch them shoplifting.
 - Sometimes, if you know that everyone else is wrong, you have to *swim against the tide*.

- 2 Match the words on the left with the words on the right to form collocations, and then put them into the gaps in the text below.

1 heavy	a ship-
2 high	b attention
3 fully	c of
4 aware	d rain
5 headed	e for
6 at	f sea
7 abandon	g winds
8 pay	h equipped

Survivors of the storm

Few of the passengers had bothered to (1) to the weather forecast on the radio before they boarded the car ferry for the short trip from the mainland to the island. Minutes after they left port, though, the ship was hit by (2) and huge waves. Then the ship came to a terrifyingly sudden stop. It had run aground on a sandbank, and it would soon break up. The captain ordered everyone to (3) immediately. The lifeboats, full of frightened passengers, (4) the coast, which was several kilometres away and invisible owing to the (5) that was falling. Everybody was (6) the danger, but they also knew that the boats they were in were solidly-built and (7) There was a ship-to-shore radio, as well as plenty of drinking water and food in case they had to spend some time (8)

- As I was only just beginning my physics degree, I felt *out of my depth* when writing my first assignment.
- Daniel had been thinking about going away for a long time; at last he *took the plunge* and bought a one-way ticket.
- Before I ask my parents for the money, I'll *test the water* to make sure they're in a good mood.
- Telling a funny story is a good way of *breaking the ice* when meeting new people.
- I needed thousands of pounds to buy a motorbike but I'd only earned twenty: it was *a drop in the ocean*.

- b Think about recent events and famous people in the news. Tell your partner about them using some of the idioms in 1–15.

EXAMPLE *Everyone had a whale of a time at the MTV Awards party last night.*

collocations

- 1 Words that frequently go together are called collocations, e.g. dependent prepositions (*on board*), combinations such as adjective + noun (*loud noise*), verb + noun (*catch a fish*), and adverb + adjective (*completely soaked*). How many can you form with *loud*, *catch* and *completely*?

- 3 a Quickly read texts 1–3 below. Where do you think each one comes from?

- b Read the texts more carefully and underline the correct collocations.

- As we arrived in the village, the summer sun was *dropping/setting* behind the towering peaks of the country's highest mountain range, casting enormous shadows *right/completely* across the lake. There was a *light/small* breeze, but the water remained *considerably/perfectly* still, as if it were made *of/by* the finest glass.
- In *rural/natural* areas, you'll find that many of the *local/regional* people don't trust the tap water – and you shouldn't, either. Follow their example and drink *bottled/contained* water only. Remember to use it when brushing your teeth, and for cleaning fresh fruit and salads. Many a holiday has been *extremely/totally* ruined by just a few *drops/spots* of contaminated water.
- One of the most charming and enduring images of the *ancient/antique* city of Cambridge – punting along the River Cam on a lazy summer afternoon – is quickly becoming one of the city's *biggest/largest* headaches. A dramatic increase *in/of* the number of tourists taking to the river is leading to traffic *lines/jams* on the Cam and a level of noise that is *bothering/disturbing* the peace of the university.