ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Speak Business English Like an American Lesson 25 Idioms and Expressions Test

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1	B	2	B	3	C	4	A	5	C	6	A	7	A	8	B				

Explanations

1. **Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:**

Susan said she'd be happy to bring chocolate chip cookies to the office. **She prides herself on being a good baker**.
✓ B) She's proud of her skills as a baker.
To **pride yourself on** something means you are proud of a skill or quality you have. Susan offers to bring cookies because she is proud of her baking. Not **She bakes cookies every day**: the idiom is about being proud, not about how often she bakes.

2. Al's attitude was bad last year, but this year he's **done a 180**.
✓ B) dramatically improved his attitude
To **do a 180** means to change completely to the opposite, like turning 180 degrees. The clue **bad last year, but this year** shows that Al's attitude has changed from bad to good.

3. The new government regulations are very complicated. **We can't make heads or tails of them**.
✓ C) We can't understand them at all.
Can't make heads or tails of something means you can't understand it at all. The clue is that the regulations are **very complicated**. The idiom is about understanding, not about whether the rules are good or bad.

4. Although you've improved your written communication skills over the past year, this is still an **opportunity area for you**.
✓ A) an area where you need to improve further
Opportunity area is a polite business phrase for a skill that still needs to improve. It is often used in job reviews. The word **still** after **Although you've improved** shows that more improvement is needed. Not **exciting opportunities**: the phrase is a softer way of talking about a weakness.

5. If you need help with your new logo, ask Molly. **She's got a knack for graphic design**.
✓ C) She's very good at graphic design.
To **have a knack for** something means to have a natural ability or talent for it. Example: **He has a knack for fixing computers.** Molly is very good at graphic design, so she can help with the logo.

6. You spent 14 hours proofreading my report? **That was beyond the call of duty**.
✓ A) That was more than I expected.
Beyond the call of duty (also **above and beyond the call of duty**) means doing much more than your job requires or than people expect. Spending 14 hours proofreading is far more than expected. Not **You were just doing your job**, which means the opposite.

7. Please **keep me in the loop regarding** your vacation plans. I need to know when you're not going to be in the office.
✓ A) keep me updated about
To **keep someone in the loop** means to keep them informed and give them the latest information. The next sentence, **I need to know when you're not going to be in the office**, shows the speaker wants to be updated.

8. Juan's new job at the lab is very complicated. It may take him a few months to **get up to speed**.
✓ B) feel comfortable doing the job
To **get up to speed** means to learn what you need to know so you can do something well and comfortably. Because the job is complicated, Juan needs a few months before he feels confident doing it.

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