ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Speak Business English Like an American Review for Lessons 11-15 Idioms and Expressions Test

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Explanations

1. Walter has an opinion about everything. No matter what the topic is, he has to put in his _____ cents.
✔ **C) two**
The idiom is **put in your two cents** (or **give your two cents**). It means to give your opinion, often when nobody asked for it: **Everyone at the meeting put in their two cents.**

2. I can't believe that Katrina forgot to order sandwiches for our lunch meeting. She really _____ the ball!
✔ **B) dropped**
To **drop the ball** means to make a mistake by forgetting or failing to do something you were responsible for. Katrina forgot the sandwiches, so she **dropped the ball**.

3. Sales are down by 30 percent so far this year. Let's think of some ways we can turn _____ the business.
✔ **C) around**
To **turn around** a business means to make a failing business successful again. The clue is that sales are down by 30 percent. Not **turn up**, which means to appear or to increase the volume.

4. Our copy machine is broken. Before we shell _____ for a new one, let's call the repairman and see if he can fix it.
✔ **A) out**
To **shell out** means to pay money, especially a lot of money you would rather not spend: **We had to shell out $500 for a new printer.**

5. The pharmaceutical company spent millions of dollars trying to come up with a cure for cancer, before finally deciding to throw _____ the towel.
✔ **C) in**
To **throw in the towel** means to give up or stop trying. The company spent millions and then **finally** decided to stop. Not **throw up**, which means to vomit.

6. I won't go over all the details in the contract with you now, but _____ a nutshell, we are offering to pay you $150,000 a year for your services.
✔ **B) in**
In a nutshell means "in a few words" or "to sum up." The speaker won't explain all the details, but gives the main point briefly.

7. Joan's letters to clients often have typos in them. In the future, she should _____ her i's and _____ her t's.
✔ **B) dot / cross**
The idiom is **dot your i's and cross your t's**. It means to be very careful and pay attention to every small detail. You put a dot on an **i** and a line across a **t**, so the order **cross / dot** is wrong.

8. We're going to _____ the envelope and try a brand new type of online advertising this year.
✔ **A) push**
To **push the envelope** means to go beyond the usual limits and try something new or daring. Trying **a brand new type** of advertising is the clue.

9. One of our customers is looking for a humidifier that also works as an air filter. Can you help her track that _____?
✔ **A) down**
To **track down** something means to find it after searching for it: **I finally tracked down the file.** Not **track up**, which is not an English phrasal verb.

10. You need to speak with Brandon about his performance. Lately, it hasn't been _____ to scratch.
✔ **C) up**
Up to scratch means good enough or at the expected standard. Brandon's work hasn't been **up to scratch**, so his manager needs to talk to him.

11. Since he made the big sale two years ago, Mike hasn't worked very hard. He's been _____ on his laurels.
✔ **A) resting**
To **rest on your laurels** means to stop trying because you are satisfied with a past success. Mike made one big sale and then stopped working hard. Not **relying**: it fits the meaning, but the fixed idiom is **resting**.

12. Before we make a final decision, does anybody else want to weigh _____ on this issue?
✔ **B) in**
To **weigh in** on something means to give your opinion in a discussion: **Does anyone want to weigh in before we vote?**

13. Don't try to pass the _____ to your employees. It's time you take some responsibility.
✔ **A) buck**
To **pass the buck** means to give the responsibility or blame for something to someone else. **Buck** is an informal American word for a dollar, but the idiom always uses **buck**, not **dollar**.

14. We've got to call 200 customers as part of our market research survey. Who's going to pitch _____ and start making calls?
✔ **C) in**
To **pitch in** means to help with a job that a group has to do. Calling 200 customers is a big task, so the speaker asks who will help.

15. If we get _____ track, we're not going to be able to finish our meeting on time.

✓ C) off

To **get off track** means to stop talking about the main topic. The result is that the meeting won't end on time. Not **on track**, which means following the plan and would not cause a delay.

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