

SAMPLE CHAPTER*

IT'S A BREEZE

42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms

Written by
Toni Aberson

*reproducible for classroom use

RAINING CATS AND DOGS

USAGE

It was **raining cats and dogs** when we were driving to the airport.

MEANING

If it is **raining cats and dogs**, it is raining very heavily.

STORY

Felipe and Maria decided to go to the movies in New York City. They felt lucky when they found a free and legal parking place three blocks from the theater. After the movie was over, though, it was **raining cats and dogs**. Felipe said, “Oh no, I forgot my umbrella. There is no sense in both of us getting wet. Maria, you wait here in the lobby while I get the car.” Even though Felipe ran to the car, he got soaked in the downpour. When Felipe returned with the car to the theater, Maria thought she had a very **cool** boyfriend.

VOCABULARY

free - at no cost.

- ◆ *Ever since Clara could remember, the beach was free and for the public.*

legal - within the law; not against the law.

- ◆ *In many states, the legal age to get a learner’s permit to drive is sixteen.*

soaked - completely wet; thoroughly wet; getting drenched.

◆ *The chef soaked the chicken in his favorite sauce.*

downpour - a very heavy rain.

◆ *Bill got soaked in the downpour.*

umbrella - a handheld protection against rain.

◆ *People who live in London often take an umbrella in case it rains.*

PRACTICE

1. Fill in each of the blanks in the following sentences with the most apt vocabulary word.

The _____ speed limit on highways in Texas has been raised to 80 miles per hour.

Even though Karen used a large umbrella, she got _____ in the downpour.

The ad said, "Buy one can of peaches, get one _____."

2. The word *downpour* is a compound word. A compound word is made by joining two words. In this case, the word *down* and the word *pour* have been joined to form the word *downpour*. Read the following words and circle those that are compound words.

thing	somewhere	grocery	smartphone
something	chocolate	eyeglasses	underground
hand	basketball	family	childbirth
handbag	pancake	computer	bookstore
rain	snowball	earring	washrag
raining	surprise	fingernail	racehorse
raincoat	dollhouse	lawyer	eyeball

CONVERSATION

1. Who are your favorite movie stars? Why?
2. Would you like to be a movie star? Why or why not?
3. Do you like animated movies? Which is your favorite animated movie?
4. Do you remember the first movie you ever saw? What was it?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TONI ABERSON has written educational books since retiring from teaching English to high school and college students and supervising high school English teachers for 35 years. Aberson (M.A. English; M.A. Psychology and Religion) believes that a lively classroom is the optimal learning environment.

“If people are thinking, sharing, and laughing, then they’re learning,” notes Aberson, the co-author of *Compelling American Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Intermediate English Language Learners*. “The mere fact that students are in an English classroom attests to their courage and their determination to learn.”

“Both high school and adult English students bring a wealth of interesting experiences with them,” continues Aberson. “They bring the world into the classroom. The challenge for English teachers is to put students at ease and encourage them to practice English. What better way than to ask students about their lives? I love teaching English.”

Aberson has co-authored two additional Chimayo Press books for adult English language learners. Her first book, *Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics*, a fluency-focused advanced English as Second Language (ESL) textbook, has been used by English learners, teachers, and tutors in over 50 countries. *It’s A Breeze: 42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms* reflects her focus on real-life expressions and situations—and the importance of authentic communication for teenagers, college students, and working adults.

“The key in a classroom is engagement,” notes Aberson, a member of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). “People become interested and excited when they’re learning about the daily stuff of life. When students are thinking and writing and talking about their real lives—food, jobs, family, homes, sports, movies—that’s when students learn the language.”

“Learning English is not easy,” continues Aberson. “It can be a real challenge, but it can also be fun and stimulating. That’s what I’m aiming for—the real life and the fun that stimulates ESL students so they want to learn more and share their experiences. Everybody wants to jump in, and learning English becomes a breeze.”

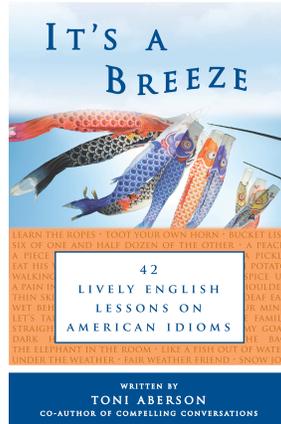
Aberson lives in Southern California, where she loves to garden and spend as much time as possible on the beach.

ERIC H. ROTH (editor) teaches international students the pleasures of writing and speaking English at the University of Southern California. For the last twenty years, he has taught

English to high school, community college, and university students. Roth co-authored the *Compelling Conversations* series of fluency-focused ESL textbooks with Abersson, and has taught in France, Spain, and Vietnam. He has also given CATESOL and TESOL presentations on effective communicative teaching methods. *It's A Breeze* is his fourth Chimayo Press publication.

ABOUT THIS BOOK AND CHIMAYO PRESS

It's A Breeze: 42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms explicitly emphasizes American phrases in short, self-contained lessons.



The primary audience is newcomers to the United States as well as recent and not-so-recent immigrants, who may be studying at an American high school, adult school, community college, or university. Speaking English remains the passport to a better life, and understanding and using American idioms remains essential to clearly communicate with native speakers. Unfortunately, idioms are often confusing and usually only taught at the most advanced levels. Many lower level English language learners often find idioms particularly difficult. This thin volume clearly introduces common American idioms in a comfortable manner with short reading, writing, and speaking exercises.

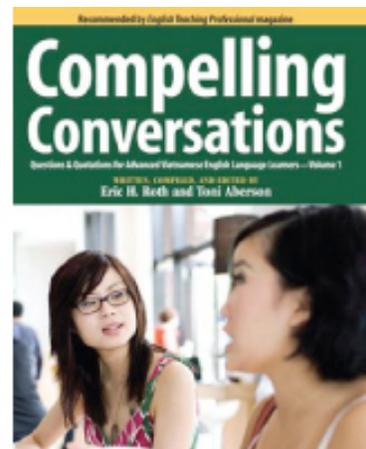
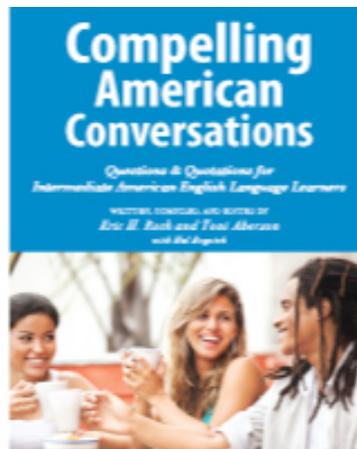
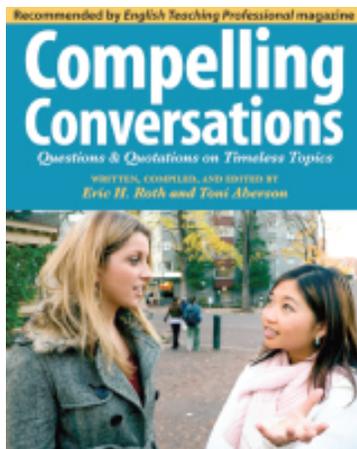
Intended as a supplemental textbook for beginning high or intermediate low English language learners, *It's A Breeze* can add a vital linguistic element to traditional life skills curriculum for high school, adult, and community college classes. English teachers and private tutors can also use the book as a textbook for the rare idioms class. Literacy programs and Intensive English programs can use it as a high-low text for their students.

All immigrants deserve a quality education that allows them to express themselves, develop their English language skills, and deepen their critical thinking skills. Classrooms can also provide sanctuary for sometimes isolated, often stressed students. This book provides students the words and phrases to share their experiences in vivid English. It also attempts to fill in common gaps between student interests and the sometimes narrow focus of standardized tests.

Chimayo Press, an independent publishing company, believes that many language programs too often teach students to mostly listen and seldom speak—and often underestimate the academic, social, and professional abilities of many American immigrants.

Therefore, we deliberately chose to emphasize speaking skills and fluency in all of our books for English language learners. Our first book, *Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics* has been used in English classrooms in over 50 countries. Since 2007, Chimayo Press has created quality niche books. The series continued with *Compelling American Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Intermediate American English Language Learners* in 2012. *It's A Breeze* is our fourth title.

All Chimayo Press titles include both practical topics and philosophical questions because American immigrants deserve the same level of sophisticated materials that international English as Foreign Language (EFL) students enjoy in the stronger international schools. We hope American English language learners begin asking more questions, speak more in their workplaces, and create their own compelling conversations – across the globe.



Visit us at www.ChimayoPress.com to find more tips on fluently speaking English, to suggest conversation topics, or to contribute your favorite proverbs, idioms, and/or quotations.

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