

## IDIOMATIC LANGUAGE

### SKILL 16: LISTEN FOR TWO- AND THREE-PART VERBS

Two- and three-part verbs appear in some questions in the short dialogues. These verbs are expressions that include a verb and one or more particles (such as *in*, *on*, or *at*); the particle changes the meaning of the verb. Questions involving two- and three-part verbs can be difficult for students because the addition of the particle changes the meaning of the verb in an idiomatic way.

#### Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



On the recording, you hear:

- (man) *What time does the meeting start?*  
 (woman) *Didn't you hear that it was called off by the director?*  
 (narrator) *What does the woman say about the meeting?*

In your test book or on the computer screen, you read:

- (A) The director called a meeting.  
 (B) The director phoned her about the meeting.  
 (C) The director called the meeting to order.  
 (D) The director canceled the meeting.

In this question, the two-part verb *called off* has a different meaning from the verb *call*, which means *phone*. The two-part verb *call off* means *cancel*, so the best answer is answer (D).

**NOTE:** A list of common two- and three-part verbs and exercises using these verbs appear in Appendix B. You may want to study these two- and three-part verbs before you try the following exercises.

**EXERCISE 16:** In this exercise, underline the two- or three-part verb in each short dialogue. Then read the question and choose the best answer to that question. Remember that the best answer is one that is related to the meaning of the two- or three-part verb and might not seem to be related to the meaning of the verb without the particle.

- (man) *Did you have your history exam today?*  
 (woman) *No, the professor put it off for another week.*  
 (narrator) *What does the woman say about the exam?*

(A) She would like to put it out of her mind.  
 (B) The professor canceled it.  
 (C) It was moved to another location.  
 (D) It was delayed.
- (woman) *Do we have any more soap?*  
 (man) *We've run out of it. Someone will have to go to the store.*  
 (narrator) *What does the man mean?*

(A) He will run to the store.  
 (B) He needs soap to wash himself after running.  
 (C) There is no more soap.  
 (D) They have a store of soap at home.

3. (man) *I need to take the written test to renew my driver's license.*  
 (woman) *Then, you'll have to brush up on the laws.*  
 (narrator) *What does the man need to do?*
- (A) Reapply for his driver's license.  
 (B) Sweep around the lawn.  
 (C) Learn the laws for the first time.  
 (D) Review the information that will be on the test.

**TOEFL EXERCISE 16:** In this exercise, listen carefully to each short dialogue and question on the recording, and then choose the best answer to the question. You should be particularly careful of two- and three-part verbs.



NOW BEGIN THE RECORDING AT TOEFL EXERCISE 16.

1. (A) Phone their neighbors  
 (B) Call to their neighbors over the fence  
 (C) Help the neighbors move in  
 (D) Visit their neighbors
2. (A) The course is becoming more interesting.  
 (B) The course used to be more interesting.  
 (C) The course is about the same as it was.  
 (D) He's not as bored in the class as the woman.
3. (A) Her headache is getting worse.  
 (B) She felt better this morning than now.  
 (C) She seems to be feeling better now.  
 (D) She is just getting another headache now.
4. (A) The man should stop breaking his cigarettes in half.  
 (B) The man should decrease the number of cigarettes he smokes.  
 (C) The man should cut the ends off his cigarettes.  
 (D) The man should stop smoking completely.
5. (A) The client presented his case to the lawyer.  
 (B) The client was upset about the lawyer's rejection.  
 (C) The client was annoyed because the lawyer returned the suitcase.  
 (D) The client made the lawyer unhappy about the case.
6. (A) She gets along with lots of people.  
 (B) She gets back at people who cross her.  
 (C) She gets rid of people she doesn't want to spend time with.  
 (D) She tries to get ahead of everyone else.
7. (A) He must try to find the children.  
 (B) It is necessary for him to clean up after the children.  
 (C) The children need to be watched.  
 (D) He's going to see what the children have done.
8. (A) They are going on strike.  
 (B) They are lying down on the job.  
 (C) They are being released from their jobs.  
 (D) They are relaxing too much at the factory.
9. (A) He is betting that the football team will win.  
 (B) He really wants to succeed.  
 (C) It is not so difficult to play on the football team.  
 (D) He pulled a muscle while playing football.
10. (A) She's unsure why she tolerates the man.  
 (B) She doesn't know where she put her keys.  
 (C) She is actually the one who put the keys in the car.  
 (D) She can't understand why the man did what he did.