

EPISODE 15
LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



DECISIONS



"I need a new car", says Julia in a sad voice. It is true, she does. She just had to have her old car towed away after it **broke down** (= stopped working) in the middle of a busy intersection. It was not the first time it had happened.

"Do you? All right, let's **look into** some possibilities (= study the facts about them). Would you prefer a new car or a second-hand one?" Timothy approaches the matter with his usual efficiency.

"Well, we'd have to **weigh up** the pros and cons of both these options."

"Why don't we, then? A new car first. On the plus side: it is new. It comes with a guarantee. Better selection. Hmm... What else?"

"It is safer, somehow - you know that nobody has **crashed it into** a tree, then had a mechanic **do it up** nicely (= renovate) and is now trying to **pass it off** as no-accident-ever..."

"Right. And on the minus side: the price, obviously."

"Obviously. I think realistically it would be better to get a second-hand one. We would just need to take somebody with us to the dealer who really understands cars, who could **look them over** for us and tell us what their condition really is."

"I know just the person!" Timothy's face lights up. "Remember Larry Kerretuli? The guy I was best friends with in high school? He runs a garage now. I'll give him a call in a second."

"Will he be home now?" asks Julia doubtfully.

"Everybody is at home on Sunday evening, aren't they?" Timothy reassures her as he reaches for the phone.

More contexts for the new words:

- I can't believe you **passed up** the chance to work for Hillary Clinton!
(= to fail to take advantage of an opportunity)
- There is no milk left for the coffee, so we'll just have to **do without**.
(= to manage without having something)
- Damian is under huge pressure at work these days and it's really **weighing on** him.
(= to make somebody worried and unhappy)

EXERCISE 1

Match the phrasal verbs to their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. to renovate sth | a) to weigh sth up |
| 2. to check/ examine sth | b) to break down |
| 3. to pretend that sth is sth else | c) to do sth up |
| 4. to balance sth | d) to look into sth |
| 5. to stop working | e) to look sth over |
| 6. to investigate sth | f) to pass sth of as sth else |

EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions, then answer them.

1. When was the last time something broke in your house? What was it?
2. Have you started planning your next holiday? What options are you looking?
3. If you had lots of money to do your apartment, what would you change?

ENGLISH IN USE



Look at this sentence from the text:

*Everybody is at home on Sunday evening, **aren't they?***

The question tag here ("aren't they?") seems to be wrongly matched with the main verb and subject of the sentence ("everybody is"). However, the sentence is correct. What would happen if we wanted to maintain the same verb form, i.e. "is"? We would have to choose between a masculine and a feminine pronoun: Everybody is at home, isn't **he**? Everybody is at home, isn't **she**? However, the whole point of using the word "everybody" is that it covers - well, everybody: women, men and all the humans in between :). That's why it is more consistent with the idea of the sentence to use the pronoun "they" and change the verb form accordingly. Similar sentences include:

*Anybody can join this club, **can't they?***

*Nobody likes him, **do they?***

*Everyone was present, **weren't they?***

*No one should be forced to do it, **should they?***

*Not anyone could come in, **could they?***

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Our last-minute choice to go to Portugal instead of Greece was a disaster.
B/ Well, **ELEVENTH-HOUR DECISIONS** are seldom good.

An **eleventh-hour decision** is a decision made very late, or at the last possible moment.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If you **GET OUT OF** something, you avoid doing something that you should do.

*I know you're very indecisive, but you can't **get out of** making this decision.
I said I'd meet him, but now I want to **get out of** it.*

2. If you **DO AWAY WITH** something, you get rid of it.

*If you're not sure which option to choose, first **do away with** the ones you're sure are wrong.
A lot of the restrictions on exports have been **done away with**.*



EXERCISE 3

Match the sentence halves.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The prime minister's eleventh-hour decision | a. of doing the washing up. |
| 2. Ruth always tries to get out | b. was made in a great hurry. |
| 3. Computers have enabled us to do away | c. with a lot of paperwork. |

NEWS



THE LEADER STEPS DOWN

The leader of the small African country Mualibia has finally decided to **step down** today, after weeks of bloody **riots**, political **strife** and social **turmoil**. Ali Muaddib came to power via a military **coup** ten years ago, and had been ruling with an iron hand ever since. The citizens had been denied every right, including voting rights and the right to free speech. The **omnipresent** repression had affected all the layers of life in the country, including religion, trade and education. When a few weeks ago the citizens decided to stand up to the dictator, nobody believed they would be successful. And yet here they stand, victorious at last, with the hard-earned freedom finally at their hands. Will they be able to act wisely, now that the tyrant is done away with? Let us hope that they will make only the right decisions.

GLOSSARY

- **to step down** – to resign
- **a riot** – a violent protest
- **strife** – conflict
- **turmoil** – disorder
- **a coup** – illegal and violent taking of power
- **omnipresent** – present everywhere

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. c
2. e
3. f
4. a
5. b
6. d

Ex. 2

1. down
2. into
3. up

Ex.3

1. b
2. a
3. c