


EPISODE 109
LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



HOME ALONE

“Home Alone” is one of the biggest **box office** (a measure of how popular and financially successful a movie or is) successes in movie history. Along with its sequel “Home Alone2”, it g  n a particular amount of money before tax is paid or costs are taken away) over half a billion dollars worldwide. If you ask me, they’re not particularly funny films. There is too much **slapstick** (a type of humorous acting in which the actors behave in a silly way, such as by throwing things, falling over) humour **for my liking** (in my opinion) – people slipping over or having their faces covered in cream – but there is something about the films which appeals to a **deep-held** (real) fantasy we all and when we were children: freedom to escape from our parents and do whatever we wanted. Do you remember the times when your parents went away for the weekend leaving you, and you immediately rang up your friends and held a party? Later, the police came and broke it up at night because the neighbours were complaining about the noise. When you cleared up the following day, you found hundreds of cigarettes burns in the carpet, and when your mother discovered that, you were **grounded** (be punished and stopped at home) for a week, while your brother **got away with** (being able to avoid punishment) it because he said you forced him into it.

EXERCISE 1

Make collocations by matching:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. cigarette | a. up friends |
| 2. I was grounded | b. a million |
| 3. I got way | c. humour |
| 4. I rang | d. burns |
| 5. slapstick | e. with it |
| 6. it grossed | f. for a week |



ENGLISH IN USE



When talking about things that have happened to us, it is common to use vague or approximate language.

- 1.They must've been **about 30 or 40** people there. (between 30-40)
2. He was **sort of** smiling at me. (it wasn't exactly a smile)
- 3.His skin had turned a weird **blueish** colour and he'd stopped breathing. (It wasn't exactly blue)
4. The policeman looked at me and said "Is this your car?, you know... **blah, blah, blah...**" (and some other things)
5. It was **kind of** expensive looking. (quite, used when you cannot find the right word to express your point of view).

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



PUT SB ON A PEDESTAL = admire sb so much that you do not see their faults

DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM = become less involved or connected with sth

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



PILE UP = increase in amount or quantity

HOLD SB BACK = stop sb being successful as they should be



EXERCISE 2

Match the sentence halves.


- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. You're free, nobody is holding you | a. up in the office. |
| 2. The workload is piling become loners. | b. themselves from others and |
| 3. The firstborn children are often put you. | c. back and no one is nagging |
| 4. The middle children who feel left out may distance | d. on a pedestal. |

NEWS



LEAVING KIDS AT HOME

“School bells will be ringing in a new school year soon and families across the country are busy getting the kids ready to return to the classroom. For many of these kids, a return to school also means being home alone after school until their parents get home from work. The American Red Cross has steps parents and children can take to make these after-school hours safer and less stressful. The first thing parents need to decide is if their child is responsible enough to stay home alone. If not, other options include after-school child care, programs at schools and youth clubs, or **enrolling** the child in youth sports programs. Whether a child is going to stay home alone should depend on the child's **maturity** and comfort level. A general **rule of thumb** is that no child less than eight years of age should be left alone for any extended period of time. If the child is going to go home after school, it's a good idea to have them call to check in when they get home. For an older child, set **ground rules** about whether other kids can come over when the parents are absent, whether cooking is an option, whether they can leave the home. Other steps parents can take include:

 Practice an emergency plan with the child so they know what to do in case of fire, injury, or other emergencies. Write the plan down and make sure the child knows where it is.

- Let children know where the flashlights are. Make sure that the batteries are fresh, and that the child knows how to use them.
- Remove or safely store in locked areas dangerous items like guns, knives, hand tools, power tools, **razor blades**, scissors, ammunition and other objects that can cause injury.
- Make sure potential poisons like detergents, polishes, pesticides, care-care fluids, lighter fluid and lamp oils are stored in locked cabinets or out of the reach of children.
- Make sure medicine is kept in a locked storage place or out of the reach of children.”

GLOSSARY

- **enrolling** =to put yourself or someone else onto the official list of members of a course, college, or group
- **maturity** = the quality of behaving mentally and emotionally like an adult
- **a rule of thumb** = practical and approximate way of doing or measuring something
- **ground rules** = the principles on which future behaviour is based
- **razor blades** = a thin flat piece of metal with a sharp edge for cutting that can be used in a razor

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. cigarette burns
2. I was grounded for a week
3. I got away with it
4. I rang up friends
5. slapstick humour
6. it grossed a million

Ex.2

- 1.c
- 2.a
- 3.d
- 4.b