

Task A: Story

➡ Read the story twice. Then discuss the questions.

Self-Help Book

Kelsey used to be angry most of the time. She **had a chip on her shoulder** because kids teased and bullied her in grade school. Then Kelsey learned to play basketball. She had natural talent and she worked hard to improve herself. One day she realized it was much more fun to be happy with yourself than to care about what other people said. That **got the ball rolling**. She smiled more and soon made many friends.



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Kelsey wrote a book to help kids get along and feel okay. In **Keep Your Eye on the Ball**, Kelsey gives common sense tips about everything today's teens want to know about self-confidence, friendships, dating, and dealing with parents.

Self-help books about how to be happy are a **dime a dozen**. Some of them teach you that when something bad happens to you, think of it as a **blessing in disguise**. Others tell you not to worry about your shortcomings because everyone has faults.

All of that is good advice, but the new self-help book by Kelsey Chambers is a **breath of fresh air**. It's been **selling like crazy** since it came out last month. Kelsey **tells it like it is**. She doesn't pretend she has always made wise choices, but she has learned to **make the most of** her mistakes. You'll laugh along with Kelsey as she **pokes fun at herself** yet gives good advice.

1. Is *Keep Your Eye on the Ball* a good title for Kelsey's book? Explain.
2. How can something bad be a blessing in disguise?
3. Why are self-help books a dime a dozen?

Task B: Idioms and Example Sentences

➞ Read the idioms and example sentences.

Idioms	Sentences
1. blessing in disguise	Having a brother with autism turned out to be a blessing in disguise for our family.
2. breath of fresh air	The new mayor is a breath of fresh air because she's making lots of good changes for our city.
3. dime a dozen	Internet blogs are a dime a dozen.
4. get the ball rolling	Let's get the ball rolling by listing the things we need for our project.
5. have a chip on your shoulder	Mason has had a chip on his shoulder ever since he didn't make the football team this year.
6. keep your eye on the ball	You have to keep your eye on the ball when you play chess.
7. make the most of something	Let's make the most of the daylight we have left.
8. poke fun at someone	Don't poke fun at someone for something the person can't change.
9. sell like crazy	New teen fashions sell like crazy when they are cool and priced right.
10. tell it like it is	Don't pretend that you get along beautifully with your new stepmom; tell it like it is.

Task C: Explaining Idioms

➞ Answer these questions and explain your answers.

1. If you keep your eye on the ball, are you paying attention to what's going on?
2. If a poster is a dime a dozen, is it rare?
3. If something is a blessing in disguise, were you happy about it when it first happened?
4. Do you need a tool to poke fun at someone?
5. If you tell it like it is, do you tell a fib?
6. If you just got the ball rolling for something, are you almost finished with it?
7. If you make the most of a bad situation, are you being positive?
8. If someone is a breath of fresh air, is the person boring?
9. If someone has a chip on his shoulder, can you see it?
10. If something sells like crazy, do you have to work hard to get people to buy it?

Task D: Matching Idioms and Definitions

➞ Write the letter of each meaning next to the idiom it defines.

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| 1. ____ blessing in disguise | a. to pay close attention to what's happening |
| 2. ____ breath of fresh air | b. to be completely honest |
| 3. ____ dime a dozen | c. a refreshing change |
| 4. ____ get the ball rolling | d. to sell very quickly |
| 5. ____ have a chip on your shoulder | e. to hold a grudge; to be upset about something that happened a while ago |
| 6. ____ keep your eye on the ball | f. to take full advantage of something |
| 7. ____ make the most of something | g. to start an activity |
| 8. ____ poke fun at someone | h. to tease or make fun of someone |
| 9. ____ sell like crazy | i. something that starts out bad and turns out to be a good thing |
| 10. ____ tell it like it is | j. cheap and easy to find |

Task E: Related Idioms

➞ Guess what each idiom means. Then use a resource to check your hunch.

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. be on the level | 12. make hay while the sun shines |
| 2. dig/dive into something | 13. make light of someone/something |
| 3. don't pull any punches | 14. on the ball |
| 4. get the show on the road | 15. put the best spin on something |
| 5. hold a grudge | 16. see the glass half full/empty |
| 6. keep your eyes open | 17. sell like hotcakes |
| 7. lay your cards on the table | 18. shoot from the hip |
| 8. level with someone | 19. shoot/be straight |
| 9. look for the silver lining | 20. sugarcoat something |
| 10. look on the bright side | 21. take advantage of something |
| 11. look sharp | 22. yank someone's chain |

Task A: Story

➡ Read the story twice. Then discuss the questions.

Saving Face

For years, Connor dreamed about riding the nearby mountain trails on a scooter. When he was almost 14, he asked his dad for a scooter for his birthday. His dad said, "No, Connor, it's too dangerous. You can ask for a scooter **until you're blue in the face**, but the answer is no." That was a **slap in the face** to Connor.

Connor kept looking at the pictures of scooters on his bedroom walls. It was **as plain as the nose on his face** that he wanted a scooter. A year later, Connor's dad **did an about-face** and gave Connor a scooter. Connor was thrilled! He promised to ride safely and take care of his scooter.

Soon Connor boasted to his friends about how well he could ride his scooter. He invited them to watch him ride. Everything was **as smooth as silk** until Connor tried to show off. He lost his balance and fell. He and his scooter were covered with mud. Now he was embarrassed. How could he **show his face** at home? Connor thought for a few minutes. Then he **put on a brave face** and got ready to **face the music**.

Connor's dad took one look at him and tried to **keep a straight face**. "Looks like you learned something today, Connor," he said. "How about getting cleaned up while I fix us a pizza?"

Connor should've known his dad would find a way to help him **save face**.

1. Why did Connor's dad do an about-face and give Connor a scooter?
2. Why didn't Connor think he could show his face at home after he fell off the scooter?
3. Why was it hard for Connor's dad to keep a straight face?



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Task B: Idioms and Example Sentences

➞ Read the idioms and example sentences.

Idioms	Sentences
1. as plain as the nose on your face	It's as plain as the nose on your face that you don't like my broccoli casserole.
2. as smooth as silk	My speech went as smooth as silk until I got the hiccups.
3. do an about-face	Maybe your mom will do an about-face and let you go to the party with Isaiah after all.
4. face the music	I lost my library book, so now I should face the music and pay for it.
5. keep a straight face	I couldn't keep a straight face while my little brother tried to tell his first knock-knock joke.
6. put on a brave face	Bruce put on a brave face while the doctor stitched his cut.
7. save face	The principal tried to find a compromise that would save face for both of the arguing students.
8. show your face	I'm surprised you can show your face here after what you did to Devon.
9. slap in the face	It was a slap in the face when Dawn called me a liar in front of my friends.
10. until you are blue in the face	I ask Eduardo to call or text me back until I'm blue in the face, but he doesn't do it.

Task C: Explaining Idioms

➞ Answer these questions and explain your answers.

1. Can you show your face if you are alone in a private place?
2. Should you hold your breath until you are blue in the face?
3. If you do an about-face, have you changed your mind about something?
4. If something is as plain as the nose on your face, is it a secret?
5. If you help someone save face, will the person be grateful to you?
6. Can you give someone a slap in the face without touching the person?
7. Does it take courage to face the music about something?
8. If a performance is as smooth as silk, is it done well?
9. Can you smile if you keep a straight face?
10. If you feel brave, do you put on a brave face?

Task D: Matching Idioms and Definitions

➡ Write the letter of each meaning next to the idiom it defines.

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|---|--|
| 1. ____ as plain as the nose on your face | a. an insulting or upsetting comment or action |
| 2. ____ as smooth as silk | b. over and over and over |
| 3. ____ do an about-face | c. without any errors or obstacles |
| 4. ____ face the music | d. to keep your reputation good; to keep respect from others |
| 5. ____ keep a straight face | e. obvious to everyone |
| 6. ____ put on a brave face | f. to completely change your mind or reverse your opinion |
| 7. ____ save face | g. to accept the consequences of your action |
| 8. ____ show your face | h. to avoid smiling |
| 9. ____ slap in the face | i. to look confident in a difficult situation |
| 10. ____ until you are blue in the face | j. to let people see you |

Task E: Related Idioms

➡ Guess what each idiom means. Then use a resource to check your hunch.

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| 1. as clear as crystal | 9. have a change of heart |
| 2. as clear/plain as day | 10. keep a stiff upper lip |
| 3. bite the bullet | 11. show up |
| 4. change your mind | 12. smooth sailing |
| 5. crack a smile | 13. splash cold water on something/someone |
| 6. crystal clear | 14. take the bull by the horns |
| 7. do a 180/a 180° turn | 15. until the cows come home |
| 8. egg on your face | 16. without a hitch |