

Lesson 2

RETURNING AN ITEM TO THE STORE

Paul bought a camera yesterday that doesn't work. He returns it to the store. Tim, the salesman, helps him make an exchange.

Paul: Hi, I bought this camera here yesterday, and it's not working.

Tim: Did you charge the battery and put it in correctly?

Paul: Yes. I followed the directions **to the letter**.

Tim: Do you mind if I **take a crack at it**?

Paul: **Be my guest**.

Tim: I usually **have the magic touch** ... Hmmm, you're right. It doesn't work. Would you like a *replacement*?

Paul: No, this is the second one I've had to return. I think I'll **steer clear of** this model.

Tim: **I hear what you're saying**. It's *frustrating* when you get one bad unit, **let alone two!**

Paul: Yeah, it's a **bummer!** I'd like my money back.

Tim: If you give me your receipt, I'll **issue a credit** to your credit card. But you might also try a different model or brand.

Paul: Maybe I will try a different camera.

Tim: We've got an excellent Canon camera that's the same price as this one. It would be an **even exchange**.

Paul: Okay, I'll take it. I hope this one **works out**.

Tim: If you're not happy with it, **don't hesitate to** bring it back.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

be my guest – please go ahead; try it yourself

- “May I try fixing the copier?” — “**Be my guest!**”

(a) bummer (slang) – a disappointment

- I lost my receipt, and the store won’t take the dress back without it. What a **bummer!**

don’t hesitate to – please go ahead and do something; don’t be shy about doing something

- If you need advice on buying a car, **don’t hesitate to** ask.

even exchange – a trade of equal value; when you return something and take something else that costs the same price

- If you return those pants and get this sweater instead, it will be an **even exchange**. They’re both \$39.99.

(to) have the magic touch – to have talent at doing something; to be able to do something difficult

- You can’t open that bottle? Give it to Ivan. He usually **has the magic touch**.

I hear what you’re saying – I understand you; I sympathize with you

- “I worked 60 hours this week. I’m exhausted!” — “**I hear what you’re saying.**”

(to) issue a credit – to give money back to

- Rachel returned the sweater to the Gap, and they **issued her a credit**.

NOTE: When a clerk issues a “store credit,” the dollar amount is put on a store card that can later be used to buy something at that store.

let alone – much less; not to mention

- I can't remember the name of the movie, **let alone** the plot.

(to) steer clear of – to avoid, usually due to a bad experience

- Mark got food poisoning at O'Reilly's? We'd better **steer clear of** that place from now on!

(to) take a crack at – to try something

- I don't know if I can fix your laptop, but I'll **take a crack at** it.

to the letter – exactly

- I followed the recipe on the box **to the letter**, but this chocolate cake tastes terrible!

(to) work out – to be successful; to meet one's needs

- I just bought my first Mac. I hope it **works out**.

Practice the Expressions

Fill in the blanks using the following expressions:

**take a crack at it to the letter has the magic touch
let alone what a bummer steer clear of works out
issue you a credit don't hesitate to even exchange**

- 1) This restaurant is lousy. Let's _____ it from now on.
- 2) You broke your leg in a skiing accident? _____!
- 3) Your toilet is broken. I'm not sure I can fix it, but I'll _____.
- 4) Installing this software is tricky, so be sure to follow the directions _____.
- 5) I barely have time to read a magazine article, _____ an entire book!
- 6) When it comes to making movies that kids love, Disney _____.
- 7) If you don't have your receipt, we can't give you your money back but we can _____.
- 8) I just bought a used car. I hope it _____.
- 9) If you'd like to return those pants and get these pants instead, it would be an _____.
- 10) If you have trouble setting up your new computer, _____ call me.



Language Lens: If Clauses to Talk About the Future

After the word “if,” you usually use a **present tense verb** to talk about the future. The part of the sentence that contains the word “if” is the **dependent clause** and the other part of the sentence is the **independent clause**:

If you see something nice for Joan, please buy it.
(dependent clause) (independent clause)

Examples:

- If the weather is nice tomorrow, let’s play tennis. (NOT: ~~If the weather will be nice tomorrow~~)
- If you are ever in Boston, give me a call. (NOT: ~~If you’ll ever be in Boston~~)
- If we have time tomorrow, we’ll go to the Metropolitan Museum. (NOT: ~~If we’ll have time tomorrow~~)
- If I win the lottery, I’m going to quit my job. (NOT: ~~If I will win~~)

Exceptions:

⇒ Use **if + will (or the contraction ‘ll)** for polite requests:

- If you’ll follow me, I’ll show you to the restroom.
- If you’ll be seated, we’ll start the program.
- If you’ll turn off your cell phones, the performance can begin.

⇒ Use **if + will (or ‘ll)** to emphasize that you’ll do something **IF it will achieve a certain goal**:

- If it’ll make you happy, I’ll organize the party.
- If it will make Chloe stop crying, I will give her a piece of candy.

⇒ Use **if + will (or ‘ll)** for indirect statements. **Indirect statements start with clauses like “I don’t know if” and “I’m not sure if”**:

- I don’t know if I’ll be there.
- I’m not sure if I’ll go tomorrow.
- Do you know if he’ll be at the party?
- Who knows if I’ll get an interview.

Quick Quiz

Fill in the blanks with the correct form:

- 1) If ____ in Chicago, I suggest you visit the Sears Tower.
a) you're ever b) you'll ever be
- 2) If Patrick ____ to Cornell, he'll definitely get accepted.
a) applies b) will apply
- 3) I don't know if my friend Marie ____ to the wedding.
a) comes b) will come
- 4) If the groundhog ____ his shadow next month, there will be six more weeks of winter.
a) sees b) will see
- 5) If ____ you happy, I'll get you that new video game for Christmas.
a) it makes b) it'll make
- 6) If ____ tomorrow, we'll have to postpone the picnic.
a) it will be raining b) it's raining
- 7) If ____ your cell phones, the concert can begin.
a) you'll turn off b) you turn off
- 8) If Joe ____ next Tuesday, who will show him around the city?
a) will come b) comes
- 9) I'm not sure if I ____ in the office tomorrow.
a) am b) will be
- 10) If ____ raining later, let's go play golf.
a) it's not b) it will not be