

## Lesson 17

### DEALING WITH LOST LUGGAGE

*Tom complains to Jim, a Flyaway Airlines representative, that his suitcase is lost. Jim asks him to fill out some paperwork and assures him his bag will likely be found.*

*Tom:* Excuse me, I just arrived on the flight from Atlanta and my suitcase is missing.

*Jim:* Did you wait until all the bags were *unloaded*?

*Tom:* Yes, I did. My suitcase is not there.

*Jim:* Here's a card with various suitcases. Which looks most like your piece of luggage?

*Tom:* It's like this one, and it's green.

*Jim:* Okay, I'll just have you **fill out this paperwork**.

*Tom:* I had all my clothes for a meeting this afternoon in that bag. Now I'm **in a bind**.

*Jim:* We'll *reimburse* you for clothing you buy today for up to \$100.

*Tom:* I'm really **pressed for time**. I won't have time to go shopping for a new suit now!

*Jim:* Well, we'll **do our best** to **track down** your bag as quickly as possible.

*Tom:* What if my suitcase is lost **for good**?

*Jim:* Baggage usually **turns up**, so **let's cross that bridge when we come to it**.

*Tom:* I'm really **up the creek** now. **It boggles my mind** how you can just lose someone's luggage!

*Jim:* Let me give you a piece of advice. Next time, wear your suit on the airplane.

*Tom:* Thanks for the advice. Next time I think I'll fly a different airline!

## IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

**(to) do one's best** – to try hard

- I'll **do my best** to finish the report by Friday.

**(to) fill out paperwork** – to complete one or more forms

- Before seeing the doctor, you'll need to **fill out this paperwork**.

**for good** – forever; permanently

- After graduating from college, Ryan moved back in with his parents. They hope he'll move out **for good** soon.

**in a bind** – in a difficult situation; in need of help

- Our school is **in a bind**. We need \$10,000 to buy new textbooks, but there's no money in our budget for it.

**it (or that) boggles my mind** – I'm very surprised by that

- Some people spend \$100 a day to send their dogs to a spa. **That boggles my mind!**

**let's cross that bridge when we come to it** – let's not worry about that until we need to

- "What if we can't find a buyer for our house?" — "**Let's cross that bridge when we come to it.**"

**pressed for time** – in a hurry; not having much time

- We asked the waiter to bring the check with dinner, explaining that we were **pressed for time**.

**(to) track down** – to find (often after a long search)

- A Picasso was stolen from the Metropolitan Museum? I hope they can **track down** the thieves!

**(to) turn up** – to be found

- Angela hopes her missing earring will **turn up** before the dance on Saturday.

**up the creek** – in trouble; in a very difficult situation

- Our rent is due on Friday, and we have no money in our bank account. We're **up the creek**!

NOTE: The longer form of this expression is: up the creek without a paddle.

## Practice the Expressions

**Fill in the blank with the missing word:**

- 1) The CEO of Walt Disney made over \$53 million last year. That boggles my \_\_\_\_!  
a) brain                      b) mind                      c) head
- 2) I can't find my theater ticket anywhere. Can you help me track it \_\_\_\_?  
a) up                              b) over                      c) down
- 3) Can I call you back later? I'm pressed \_\_\_\_ time right now.  
a) with                              b) in                              c) for

- 4) Good news! My missing theater ticket just turned \_\_\_\_.
- a) down                      b) up                      c) in
- 5) Ted needs to be at the airport in an hour and his car won't start.  
He's \_\_\_\_ a bind.
- a) up                      b) with                      c) in
- 6) Is Paul moving to Prague for \_\_\_\_ or is he just going to spend  
a year or two there?
- a) better                      b) best                      c) good
- 7) "What if we can't get up our driveway due to the snowstorm?"  
— "Let's cross that \_\_\_\_ when we come to it."
- a) street                      b) river                      c) bridge
- 8) If you want to apply for a job with the Central Intelligence  
Agency, be prepared to fill \_\_\_\_ a lot of paperwork.
- a) in                      b) out                      c) up
- 9) If we don't get our visas for Vietnam by next Tuesday, we're  
going to be up the \_\_\_\_.
- a) creek                      b) river                      c) stream
- 10) \_\_\_\_ your best to finish your homework so you can come to  
the movies with us.
- a) Make                      b) Have                      c) Do



## Language Lens: Count & Non-count Nouns

**Count nouns** (also called “countable nouns”) are people, places, or things that we can count. They can be singular (*a chair, a cup, a cat*) or plural (*chairs, cups, cats*).

**Non-count nouns** are materials, substances, concepts, information, etc. which we cannot count.

### Here are some common non-count nouns:

accommodation	furniture	postage
advice	garbage	progress
air	homework	research
baggage	information	software
bread	knowledge	sugar
butter	love	traffic
clothing	luggage	trouble
equipment	money	water
energy	music	weather
fruit	news	work

### Non-count nouns:

⇒ We do not use “a/an” directly before non-count nouns. To express a quantity of one of these nouns, use a word or phrase like:

- a piece of: a piece of bread, a piece of advice, a piece of news
- a cup of: a cup of soup, a cup of water, a cup of tea
- some: some information, some news, some furniture
- a lot of: a lot of water, a lot of luggage, a lot of happiness

⇒ Non-count nouns are always singular. Remembering this can help you avoid a lot of mistakes.

Say: This is good news! NOT: ~~These are good news!~~

Say: The equipment is heavy. NOT: ~~The equipment are heavy.~~

Say: The information is valuable. NOT: ~~The information are valuable.~~

Say: My luggage is heavy. NOT: ~~My luggage are heavy.~~

Say: The money is in the bank. NOT: ~~The money are in the bank.~~

### **Count nouns:**

⇒ A singular count noun always takes either the indefinite article (a, an) or the definite article (the):

- Tracy is looking for **a job**.
- Did Tracy get **the job** she applied for?

⇒ A plural count noun takes the definite article (the) if it refers to a definite, **specific** group. It takes no article if used in a **general** sense (generalizations):

- **The dogs** you adopted are cute. (specific → the)
- **Dogs** are fun pets. (general → no article)

### **Using the quantity expressions much, many, a little, a few:**

#### **Much/Many**

⇒ Use **much** with non-count nouns:

- How much change should we bring?
- I wish you much happiness. (I wish you a lot of happiness).\*

⇒ Use **many** with count nouns:

- How many quarters should we bring?
- I took many great classes. (I took a lot of great classes).\*

\* Note: In statements like these, you can also use “a lot of” instead of “much” or “many.” It sounds more conversational.

#### **Little/A Few**

⇒ Use **little** with non-count nouns:

- We have made little progress since the summer.
- Sam has little money left.

⇒ Use **few** with count nouns:

- We have completed a few projects since the summer.
- Sam has a few dollars left.

## Quick Quiz

Fill in the blank with the missing word or words:

- 1) Let me give you \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) an advice            b) a piece of advice
- 2) \_\_\_\_ good news!  
a) This is                b) These are
- 3) We are making \_\_\_\_ with our report.  
a) a progress            b) progress
- 4) Neil has \_\_\_\_ friends.  
a) many                 b) much
- 5) I wish you \_\_\_\_ luck with your job search.  
a) many                 b) much
- 6) The information you gave me \_\_\_\_ useful.  
a) are                    b) is
- 7) The clothing you gave my daughter \_\_\_\_ beautiful.  
a) are                    b) is
- 8) We had \_\_\_\_ time for sightseeing on our business trip.  
a) few                    b) little
- 9) I only have \_\_\_\_ dollars left in my wallet.  
a) a few                 b) a little
- 10) How \_\_\_\_ cups of coffee have you had today?  
a) much                 b) many