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Come back here? When hell freezes over!

Lesson 7

PICKING UP THE TAB AT A RESTAURANT

It's time to pay the bill at Carmen's Bistro. Tanya and John discuss who will pay it. Then they talk about how much to tip.

Tanya: Let me **pick up the tab**.

John: No, **it's my treat**. The guy is supposed to pay on a date!

Tanya: Says who? I don't want you to pay for me every time we go out! Let's **go Dutch** this time.

John: No, I'll get it. **I insist**.

Tanya: Okay, but next time **it's on me**.

John: Let's see ... The total without tax is \$74.75.

Tanya: Do you think we should leave 15 percent* or more?

John: The service was **so-so**. Our waiter was **no great shakes**. He seemed **put out** when we complained about our food.

Tanya: What did he expect? The food **left a lot to be desired!** This is supposed to be such a great restaurant. I don't know what happened.

John: I guess it's **gone downhill**. I'll leave 15 percent. I could leave less, but I don't want to be a **cheapskate!**

Tanya: Yeah, we may want to come back here someday.

John: Come back here? **When hell freezes over!**

* It's standard to tip waiters and waitresses 15-20 percent in the U.S. They are unhappy when they get less than 15 percent.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

cheapskate – someone who doesn't like to spend money; a cheap person

- Dana is such a **cheapskate**. She brings her own tea bags to restaurants and asks for a cup of hot water.

(to) go downhill – to become worse over time; to deteriorate

- The service at the Seaside Bar & Grill has really **gone downhill**. We waited 45 minutes for our food to arrive!

(to) go Dutch – to split the bill

- Amanda didn't want her boyfriend to pay the entire restaurant bill, so she suggested they **go Dutch**.

I insist – I will pay (say this when you do not want to argue anymore over who will pay the bill — it's usually the last word)

- "Dinner is my treat." — "No, you paid last time. I'm paying tonight. **I insist.**"

it's my treat – I'll pay the bill

- "Let me pay for dinner tonight." — "No, I invited you to dinner, so **it's my treat.**"

it's on me – I'll pay

- Put your wallet away. **It's on me.**

(to) leave a lot to be desired – to be bad or lacking in some way

- Josh chews with his mouth open and rests his elbows on the table. His table manners **leave a lot to be desired**.

no great shakes – not so good; fair; unimpressive

- The person we just interviewed for the job was **no great shakes**. I think we can find somebody better.

(to) pick up the tab – to pay the bill

- Everybody left the bar before the bill came, so I was stuck **picking up the tab** for our entire group!

put out – annoyed; inconvenienced

- Joel seemed really **put out** when I asked him if he could drive me to the airport.

so-so – average; not very good

- Paul and Nora weren't thrilled with their tour of Portugal. It was just **so-so**.

When hell freezes over – never

- Will the boss invite us all over to his house for dinner? **When hell freezes over**.

Practice the Expressions

Fill in the blanks using the following expressions:

pick up the tab went downhill let's go Dutch
when hell freezes over it's my treat cheapskate
so-so on me leaves a lot to be desired put out

Kara: I had a date last night with Steve, that guy I met online last week.
We went to that new restaurant downtown, Zanzibar.

Leah: How was the restaurant?

Kara: It was (1). The appetizers were good, but my fish was lousy.

Leah: So what did you think of Steve?

Kara: Things were going okay, until the bill came. Then things (2).
When the bill came, he suddenly seemed (3).

Leah: Why? He's not used to getting a bill at a restaurant?!

Kara: He looked at it and then said, "(4)."

Leah: He made you pay for your own meal? What a (5)!

Kara: So I told him, "No, dinner is (6)."

Leah: You're kidding? You offered to (7)?

Kara: Yes, I offered and he accepted.

Leah: Wow! Such cheap behavior (8).

Kara: At the end of the evening, he did say, "Next time we go out, (9)."

Leah: And when will you be going out with him again?

Kara: (10)!



Language Lens: Supposed to

Use “supposed to be” when talking about something that is generally thought to be true.

Examples:

- Paris is **supposed to be** the most romantic city in the world.
- Your boyfriend took you to dinner at Masa? That’s **supposed to be** the most expensive restaurant in the city!

Use supposed to + infinitive to:

⇒ Say what should or should not be done because of rules, common practices, or customs

Examples:

- Before ordering supplies, you’re **supposed to** get your boss’s approval.
- You’re not **supposed to** smoke inside this restaurant.

⇒ Express sarcasm and/or anger, in place of should, can, or going to

Examples:

- Who was the nineteenth president of the United States? How am I **supposed to** know? (= I don’t know! How would I know?)
- Your music is so loud, how am I **supposed to** get any work done? (= How can I get any work done with that loud music? I can’t!)
- You invited your entire office over for dinner? Who’s **supposed to** do all the cooking? (= I don’t feel like cooking for all those people! Who’s going to do all the cooking?)

⇒ Express something that was planned or intended, but did not happen (in this case, use “was/were supposed to”)

Examples:

- Luke **was supposed to** start college in the fall, but then he decided to travel around the world instead.
- We’re lost! We **were supposed to** take a right onto Danbury Road.
- We **were supposed to** go to a holiday concert last night, but it was snowing too hard.

Quick Quiz

Re-write the following with “supposed to”:

Example: If you keep talking to me, how am I going to concentrate?

Answer: If you keep talking to me, how am I supposed to concentrate?

- 1) How can I do my homework when it's so noisy in the house?
- 2) Weren't you going to tell me when it was time to get off the highway?
- 3) Who's going to do all the cooking for the big party you're planning?
- 4) Who's going to clean up this mess?
- 5) We were planning to go to London last month, but the trip got canceled.
- 6) I've heard Venice is the most beautiful city in Europe.
- 7) If you want to take vacation time, you need to get permission from your boss.
- 8) Amanda and I were going to meet yesterday, but she canceled the meeting.
- 9) Who's going to clean all these dishes in the sink?
- 10) You can't take flash pictures inside the museum.