Unit 36 House and Home Idioms

1: Literal and non-literal meanings

Match the idiomatic expressions on the left with the non-idiomatic equivalents on the right:

1. We got on like a house on fire.
2. She’s nothing to write home about.
3. It’s as safe as houses.
4. It really brought it home to me.
5. He brought the house down.
6. We did it in-house.
7. They ate us out of house and home.
8. Put your own house in order.

a. Sort out your own problems first.
b. We liked each other a lot.
c. The audience applauded a lot.
d. It made me realise.
e. We had no food left.
f. She’s not specially good-looking.
g. It’s very safe.
h. We did it ourselves.

2: House or home?

Decide which word – house or home - correctly completes the idioms below:

2. I met my boyfriend’s parents last night for the first time. We spent the evening talking about our love of horses. We got on like a house/home on fire.
3. The number one priority of the new Party Leader must be to put his party’s house/home in order after all the scandals of last year.
4. It wasn’t until I got home and sat down that the news about my job really hit house/home. Twenty-five years in the same factory and now it’s closing.
5. What are we going to do with all these old files? We’ve got to keep them for legal reasons. Where are we going to find a house/home for them in the office?

6. My flatmate never cleans or does the dishes. I think I’m going to have to tell her a few house/home truths.
7. I’ve just got one more exam to pass on my law course and then I’ll be house/home and dry. I can’t wait!
8. Look, we can’t afford to go to an advertising agency. They cost the earth! Can you find someone who can design the adverts in-house/in-home?
9. Her performance was superb and really brought the house/home down.
10. This might look dangerous, but I can assure you it’s as safe as houses/homes.
3: Home from home

Fill in the following words and expressions in the dialogues below:

- house and home
- write home
- home from home
- a good home
- no-one at home
- come home
- brought home
- the home straight

1. You always stay in the same place when you go on holiday, don't you?
   > Yes. The same hotel in Venice every year. It's a real ............... for us.
2. My brother and his family came to stay with us at Christmas. They nearly ate us out of ............... We spent a fortune on food.
3. Larry likes to talk, doesn't he? It's sometimes difficult to shut him up.
   > Yes. He'll sit and talk until the cows ............... if you let him.
4. Pam can be a bit slow sometimes. I often have to explain things three times.
   > I know what you mean. I don't like saying this, but sometimes it seems as if the lights are on but there's ............... .
5. Have you seen Christine's new boyfriend? What's he like?
   > Well, he's OK, I suppose. But nothing to ............... about.
6. We must've picked enough strawberries by now - surely?
   > Come on. We only need a few more kilos. We're on ............... now.
7. I wish I knew somebody who would give my old music centre ............... .
8. I didn't used to worry about having a beer or two, but last year a friend of mine had the most terrible car accident. It really ............... to me the reality of drinking and driving.

4: Revision

Look back at the idioms in this unit and add the final words:

1. We got on like a house on ............... .
2. He'll stay chatting till the cows come ............... .
3. I told him a few home ............... .
4. He needs to put his house in ............... .
5. It took a few days for the news to really hit ............... .
6. He's eating us out of house and ............... .
7. Her last song brought the house ............... .
8. It was nothing to write home ............... .
9. The lights are on but no-one's at ............... .
10. We're on the home ............... .

Is there anywhere you visit which is a real home from home for you?