

## SAMPLE CHAPTER\*

### IT'S A BREEZE

#### 42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms

Written by  
Toni Aberson

\*reproducible for classroom use

## TOOT YOUR OWN HORN

### USAGE

Muhammad Ali enjoyed **tooting his own horn**.

### MEANING

A person who **toots his own horn** is bragging about himself. He is making noise about his abilities. At times, it is considered poor manners to **toot one's own horn**. In some situations, bragging about oneself is okay. In America, athletes and politicians often **toot their own horns**.

### STORY

When the boxer Muhammad Ali first proclaimed, "I am the greatest," some people felt uncomfortable. They had been taught that people should not brag about themselves. He said, "I can fly like a butterfly, sting like a bee." He liked to play with words. He liked to tease. Now, when Ali **toots his own horn**, most people smile and enjoy his fun.

### VOCABULARY

**toot** - to blow into a horn; the short, sharp sound of a horn.

◆ *In some cities, it is illegal to toot a car horn for no reason.*

**brag** - boast about oneself; boast about someone closely related.

◆ *When John hit the home run that won the game, his father bragged, "That's my son!"*

**boxer** - an athlete who fights according to set rules; a prizefighter.

◆ *The boxer Manny Pacquiao is famous throughout the world.*

**comfortable** - at ease, relaxed.

◆ *I am comfortable when I wear my old sweatshirt.*

**uncomfortable** - without ease; feeling awkward.

◆ *The baby felt uncomfortable in her wet diaper.*

## **PRACTICE**

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1. Write a sentence using the idiom **toot your own horn** correctly.

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2. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the vocabulary word that best suits the meaning of the sentence:

Joe Louis was a heavyweight champion \_\_\_\_\_.

When the heat is turned up too high, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

When the traffic light changed from red to green, I heard a horn \_\_\_\_\_ from the car behind me.

## **CONVERSATION**

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1. Have you ever **tooted your own horn**? About what? How did others react?
2. Have you ever become upset when someone else **tooted his own horn**? Why? How did you feel?
3. Can you think of three situations in which it might help you to **toot your own horn**?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**TONI ABERSON** has written educational books since retiring from teaching English to high school and college students and supervising high school English teachers for 35 years. Aberson (M.A. English; M.A. Psychology and Religion) believes that a lively classroom is the optimal learning environment.

“If people are thinking, sharing, and laughing, then they’re learning,” notes Aberson, the co-author of *Compelling American Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Intermediate English Language Learners*. “The mere fact that students are in an English classroom attests to their courage and their determination to learn.”

“Both high school and adult English students bring a wealth of interesting experiences with them,” continues Aberson. “They bring the world into the classroom. The challenge for English teachers is to put students at ease and encourage them to practice English. What better way than to ask students about their lives? I love teaching English.”

Aberson has co-authored two additional Chimayo Press books for adult English language learners. Her first book, *Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics*, a fluency-focused advanced English as Second Language (ESL) textbook, has been used by English learners, teachers, and tutors in over 50 countries. *It’s A Breeze: 42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms* reflects her focus on real-life expressions and situations—and the importance of authentic communication for teenagers, college students, and working adults.

“The key in a classroom is engagement,” notes Aberson, a member of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). “People become interested and excited when they’re learning about the daily stuff of life. When students are thinking and writing and talking about their real lives—food, jobs, family, homes, sports, movies—that’s when students learn the language.”

“Learning English is not easy,” continues Aberson. “It can be a real challenge, but it can also be fun and stimulating. That’s what I’m aiming for—the real life and the fun that stimulates ESL students so they want to learn more and share their experiences. Everybody wants to jump in, and learning English becomes a breeze.”

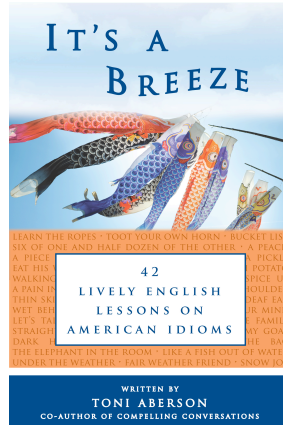
Aberson lives in Southern California, where she loves to garden and spend as much time as possible on the beach.

**ERIC H. ROTH (editor)** teaches international students the pleasures of writing and speaking English at the University of Southern California. For the last twenty years, he has taught

English to high school, community college, and university students. Roth co-authored the *Compelling Conversations* series of fluency-focused ESL textbooks with Aberson, and has taught in France, Spain, and Vietnam. He has also given CATESOL and TESOL presentations on effective communicative teaching methods. *It's A Breeze* is his fourth Chimayo Press publication.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK AND CHIMAYO PRESS

*It's A Breeze: 42 Lively English Lessons on American Idioms* explicitly emphasizes American phrases in short, self-contained lessons.



The primary audience is newcomers to the United States as well as recent and not-so-recent immigrants, who may be studying at an American high school, adult school, community college, or university. Speaking English remains the passport to a better life, and understanding and using American idioms remains essential to clearly communicate with native speakers. Unfortunately, idioms are often confusing and usually only taught at the most advanced levels. Many lower level English language learners often find idioms particularly difficult. This thin volume clearly introduces common American idioms in a comfortable manner with short reading, writing, and speaking exercises.

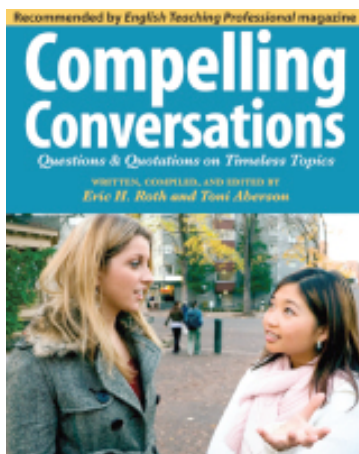
Intended as a supplemental textbook for beginning high or intermediate low English language learners, *It's A Breeze* can add a vital linguistic element to traditional life skills curriculum for high school, adult, and community college classes. English teachers and private tutors can also use the book as a textbook for the rare idioms class. Literacy programs and Intensive English programs can use it as a high-low text for their students.

All immigrants deserve a quality education that allows them to express themselves, develop their English language skills, and deepen their critical thinking skills. Classrooms can also provide sanctuary for sometimes isolated, often stressed students. This book provides students the words and phrases to share their experiences in vivid English. It also attempts to fill in common gaps between student interests and the sometimes narrow focus of standardized tests.

Chimayo Press, an independent publishing company, believes that many language programs too often teach students to mostly listen and seldom speak—and often underestimate the academic, social, and professional abilities of many American immigrants.

Therefore, we deliberately chose to emphasize speaking skills and fluency in all of our books for English language learners. Our first book, *Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics* has been used in English classrooms in over 50 countries. Since 2007, Chimayo Press has created quality niche books. The series continued with *Compelling American Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Intermediate American English Language Learners* in 2012. *It's A Breeze* is our fourth title.

All Chimayo Press titles include both practical topics and philosophical questions because American immigrants deserve the same level of sophisticated materials that international English as Foreign Language (EFL) students enjoy in the stronger international schools. We hope American English language learners begin asking more questions, speak more in their workplaces, and create their own compelling conversations – across the globe.



Visit us at [www.ChimayoPress.com](http://www.ChimayoPress.com) to find more tips on fluently speaking English, to suggest conversation topics, or to contribute your favorite proverbs, idioms, and/or quotations.

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