

**Teachers: On this first day of class, let's find out some things about our students. Ask each member of the group to answer each question.**

1. Is this your first time to attend our classes?
2. Is this your first time to be in an advanced class?
3. How long have you lived in Austin?
4. Ask the students who have been here the longest what advice they would offer to the newer arrivals.
5. Have you had problems making yourself understood in any of these situations: renting an apartment, setting up utilities, shopping, grocery stores, doctor's office?
6. Are you working here, going to school or just visiting?
7. What is something you have learned about Austin since you arrived?
8. When I arrived in Austin I was very surprised about ...

**Practice with Idioms: With a partner, read the sentences and make a guess about the meaning of the underlined idiom or vocabulary word. Then discuss with your group.**

1. The mob put a contract out on the man who squealed on them. That will put a damper on people testifying against the mob.
2. I think I can pull a few strings to get John accepted at the university. After all the admissions counselor is my aunt. To put it another way, I have the inside track on university admissions.
3. I know Jack means well by offering to help John get admitted, but I've told John he shouldn't put all his eggs in one basket. He should still try to do well on his tests and write a good admissions essay.
4. You are right that John should study hard and make good grades. The cap on in-state admissions has really put a premium on good grades and high test scores for students wanting to go to UT.
5. It's hard to put a price on a degree from a top university. It will open many doors for John. Don't put much stock in these people that advise kids to avoid college and get hands-on business experience instead. Employers will still look for a degree on your resume. Getting a good job without a degree can really pose a challenge.

6. I hate to keep putting you off, but my husband and I are not ready to make an offer on a house just yet. My husband has put some feelers out among our friends. He let them know we were looking for a bigger house. We'd like to put roots down in a quiet neighborhood with good schools. Several people indicated they will be ready to downsize soon. So we might be able to work out a trade with them since our house is small. For now, we'd like to put our house hunt on hold.
7. I really do like my new job. Unfortunately I'm away from home four to five days of every week, but that's the price I have to pay for an important job with a high salary. My wife is not too happy about me being gone, but on the other hand, she's never pressed for cash these days. She can buy what she wants. I'm happy I can provide for my family these days. I pull down a six figure salary and I'm poised to move up the chain of command in the company.
8. It took me forever to find a good job. I had to pound the pavement for months after graduation before getting an offer. Precious few graduates with literature degrees get offered high paying jobs, so I consider myself lucky.

**Discussion:**

1. Would you ever testify against the mob? Why or why not?
2. If someone offered to pull strings for you to get you something you wanted, would you let them?
3. Is a college degree more important than hands-on experience?
4. Have you bought a house in the U.S.? How difficult was the process? Do you have any advice for someone wanting to buy a house here?
5. Would you take a job where you traveled many days a week if it paid a good salary?
6. Should a person consider how much money they can make in choosing a profession?