

Unit 24 Neat and clean

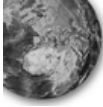
Expressions with words related to household chores

Learn the expressions

- 1 In this unit, we talked about household chores. Let's look at some idioms in English that use words associated with keeping things neat and clean. Read the sentences. Then match the expressions in boldface with the definitions in the box. Write the letter of the definition.

- a. a set of jobs or tasks
- b. get all of someone's money, usually in a dishonest way
- c. solve a small problem or difficulty
- d. reorganize, improve something
- e. come out fair or equal
- f. seem untrue
- g. overwhelm someone with emotion, usually love
- h. finish an unpleasant task
- i. hide something that could cause trouble
- j. talk about personal problems in public
- k. disappear without paying someone, or without fulfilling obligations

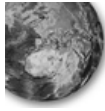
1. Be careful of special get-rich guides advertised on the Internet. Most of them are scams designed to **take people to the cleaners**. b
2. I was happy to hear that you and Megan finally managed to **iron out** your differences. You two had been fighting for much too long.
3. Don't let Paul **sweep you off your feet**. He's not at all interested in a serious relationship, and he'll only break your heart. Trust me – I know all about him.
4. Dave has always been very honest with his parents, but something about the story he told them about his new job **doesn't wash**. It sounds pretty hard to believe to me.
5. Ali, will you lower your voice? Please don't **wash our dirty linen in public**. This is between you and me, and there's no reason for anyone else to know anything about it.
6. When the vice president was suspected of embezzling money from the retirement fund, the company tried to **sweep it under the rug**. However, an employee contacted a local newspaper and the story appeared on the front page the following day.
7. After Brian left the department, Antonio and I had to **mop up** all the incomplete work.
8. The owners of the Giants baseball team decided to **clean house**. They fired the manager and all of the coaches.



9. Many of my customers have **hung me out to dry**. They ordered the products, but never paid me for them. _____
10. I think my new position in this company is going to be difficult. On my first day, my boss handed me **a whole laundry list** of things to do. _____
11. Annie and I never keep track of who has borrowed how much money from whom. Basically, it all just **comes out in the wash**. _____

Answer Key

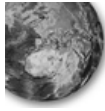
1. b 2. c 3. g 4. f 5. j 6. i 7. h 8. d 9. k 10. a 11. e



Use the expressions

2 Read the situations and choose the best response. Circle *a* or *b*.

- John said he was sick all last week, but when he came to work today he looked very relaxed and a little sunburned.
 - He's been cleaning house.
 - Hum. That doesn't wash, does it?
- Are you and Mr. Lara going to be able to work together? You don't seem to get along very well.
 - Don't worry. We're ironing out our problems.
 - Everything will be fine. I'll just take him to the cleaners.
- Why do you look so tired?
 - Oh, Mr. Garcia left me a big laundry list of things to do before he went on vacation.
 - Oh, Mr. Garcia hung me out to dry.
- Guillermo is acting a bit strange since he met Lucy. Do you think he's in love?
 - Yes, I do. She's swept him under the rug.
 - I think so. She's swept him off his feet.
- May I ask how much you paid for your wedding reception?
 - I'd rather not say. They really took me to the cleaners.
 - You don't want to know. I'm still mopping it up.
- That new client hasn't paid us anything yet, has he?
 - No, he hasn't. I think he's going to hang us out to dry.
 - No, he hasn't. He's swept us under the rug.
- Listen to that couple arguing. Some people don't mind that everyone knows their problems.
 - Oh, they're just cleaning house.
 - Not us. My husband and I would never wash our dirty linen in public.
- I heard the city is going to close the libraries on Sundays. It's terrible!
 - The mayor is sweeping the issue under the rug until after the elections. He knows many people will be upset.
 - I know. It all comes out in the wash.
- Do you think your job may be in danger?
 - Who knows? We have a new supervisor and she's been cleaning house.
 - It's possible. The new supervisor could take us all to the cleaners.
- Has Joanne paid you back the money she borrowed last month?
 - Yes, she mopped it up.
 - No, but I'm not worried. It will all come out in the wash.
- Are you just about ready to go home for the day?
 - Almost. As soon as I finish cleaning house.
 - Almost. I just need to mop up these last two little problems.



Make the expressions your own

3 Answer these questions with information that is true for you. Explain your answers providing details and describing relevant experiences.

1. Is it easy for you to iron out problems with friends and coworkers? Give an example of a time you ironed out a problem at school, work, or home.
2. How do you usually react when someone tells you a story that doesn't wash? Do you challenge them on the facts, or do you just "let it slide". Give an example.
3. Has anyone ever taken you to the cleaners? What happened? How did you react?