



Worksheet 3. Reading 2: *Expressions Using the Word Hot*

Read about some common idiomatic expressions. Then complete the exercises that follow.

- 1 *Hot* is an easily understood word. *Hot* combines with other words to form many idiomatic
- 2 expressions, some of which can't be understood from the meaning of each word alone.

- 3 The individual words *hot* and *potato*, for example, give you no idea at all about the meaning
- 4 of the expression, *hot potato*. Think of hot potato in this way: When you carry a hot, baked
- 5 potato in your hand, it is difficult, even painful, and your hand may get burned.

- 6 We might describe a publicly-disputed issue as a hot potato because the issue is difficult to
- 7 handle and delicate to address. An example would be the idea of raising taxes put forth by a
- 8 politician. Higher taxes, which may be necessary, are usually not palatable to voters. So the
- 9 questions must be dealt with gingerly, in the same way that you would handle a hot potato.

- 10 Another popular expression is *not so hot*. If you ask someone how they feel, they may
- 11 answer: "Not so hot," which means, "not very well." *Not so hot* is also a way of saying that
- 12 you do not really like something. You may tell a friend that the movie you saw last night
- 13 was not so hot, which means it wasn't very good.

- 14 A somewhat older expression is *hot shot*. A *hot shot* is a person—often a young person—
- 15 who appears extremely confident. He believes that he is quite important, at least in his
- 16 field. He is sure he can succeed, but he often fails. The expression began in the army,
- 17 where a hot shot was a soldier who fired a gun without aiming carefully.

- 18 *Hot* is a word that is often used to talk about anger. For example, a person who becomes
- 19 angry easily is called a *hothead*. An angry person's neck often becomes red. We say he is
- 20 *hot under the collar*. You could say that your friend is not a hothead, but got hot under the
- 21 collar when someone stole his iPod.

- 22 In 1963, *hot line* appeared as a new expression. The *hot line* was a direct communications
- 23 link between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. It had one important
- 24 purpose: to prevent accidental war between the two competitors during the period known
- 25 as the Cold War. Today we use the expression *hot line* to refer to a special phone line to be
- 26 used to communicate something very important about a serious topic.

**Worksheet 3 (page 2)****Reading 2: Comprehension practice**

Complete the sentences. Write the letter of the explanation in **Column B** that describes each **bold word/phrase** in **Column A**.

Column A	Column B
1. A hothead is ____.	a. an exclusive phone line to be used for special and critical situations
2. A hot potato is ____.	b. a person who acts in a super-confident manner, as though he is very important
3. A hot shot is ____.	c. someone who always gets very angry very easily.
4. Hot under the collar refers to ____.	d. something that is not very good, or someone who is not very well.
5. A hot line is ____.	e. something that is difficult to deal with because it is so delicate.
6. Not so hot refers to ____.	f. someone who has gotten angry about something