

Warm Up

Let's start 2026 by having a conversation about the holidays. With a partner, please talk about the following.

- How your winter vacation was.
- Where you went.
- What you did.
- Who you saw.
- Presents you gave or got.
- New things you tried.
- Family traditions that you continued.
- Things you realized.
- etc.

Idioms

Let's look at some beauty related idioms. With a partner, read the following idioms and tell each other which ones you have heard before and which ones you have not. Then talk about the meaning of each idiom. If you don't know an idiom, talk about what you think it might mean.

1. Dress to kill
2. A head-turner
3. Ugly as sin
4. Put on your face
5. Look like something the cat dragged in
6. Pretty is as pretty does
7. Look like a million bucks
8. Beauty is only skin deep
9. Lipstick on a pig
10. Easy on the eyes

Example Sentences

1. You sure were **dressed to kill** the other night.
2. Man, that girl is **a head-turner**.
3. I don't mean to be rude, but that dog of yours is **ugly as sin**.
4. I just have to **put on my face**, then I'll be ready to go.
5. What happened to you? You look **like something the cat dragged in**.
6. You don't need that dress, honey. Remember, **pretty is as pretty does**.
7. I don't mean to brag, but I **looked like a million bucks** on my wedding night. You should have seen me.
8. It's hard to believe he's so popular with the ladies, but you know what they say, **beauty is only skin deep**.
9. Painting this old house is like putting **lipstick on a pig**. The windows will still be drafty and the roof will still leak.
10. Who is that man over there in the blue blazer? He sure is **easy on the eyes**.

Idiom Practice

1. Ever since 2008, governments around the world have been doing one stimulus package after another, but they are all just _____ .
2. I wasn't much of a _____ in high school, but in college, I really blossomed.
3. It only takes me five minutes to walk here from the bus stop, but the wind was so strong this morning, by the time I got here, I looked like _____ .
4. You should buy that suit. It makes you look like _____ .
5. You look different today. Did you forget to put _____ ?
6. I know, Mom. You don't have to tell me that again. _____ , right? Even so, I'm not going out looking like this.
7. I like the changes you made to your homepage. It's a lot _____ than it was before.
8. You might be a good cook, but you sure don't know a thing about decorating. This room is _____ .

Today's Scene

Elizabeth Sparkle is a very famous fitness instructor/TV personality. Her show, *Sparkle Your Life*, has been a success for many years now. Today is her 50th birthday, and the producer of her show has a personal rule that any woman the age of 50 is too old for fitness videos. As a result, he takes her out to lunch and tells her that he is canceling her show.

While driving home from this luncheon, Elizabeth is in a very bad car accident. Fortunately, though, she survives without so much as a scratch.

Today's scene starts when she is walking out of the hospital, right after having been evaluated by a strange doctor who secretly puts a mysterious card in her coat pocket. As Elizabeth is looking at the doctor's card and contemplating where it came from, she bumps into an old high school classmate.

Their interaction is awkward. Let's watch the scene and see how it is awkward.



Role Play:

There are three characters in today's scene: Elizabeth, Fred, and a narrator. In pairs, one person can play Elizabeth and the narrator, and the other person can play Fred. If you're Elizabeth, practice being surprised and hesitant. Then, when you switch to the role of narrator, try being firm and professional.

Conversation

At the end of 2025, the Japanese U-can buzzword of the year was Sanae Takaichi's, *Work. Work. Work. Work.*

With the idea of creating a better work/life balance trending globally, some might say that Sanae Takaichi's words are a step in the wrong direction. To borrow the words of Aldo, from the movie *Conclave*, she is undoing years of progress.

What do you think?

Do you like Takaichi's words? Do you think they promote an ideal that is important for Japanese society today? Or, do you think that her words are potentially dangerous because they seem to encourage a return to the hard Japanese work culture of years past?

Examples:

- I agree with Takaichi because I think hard work leads to success.
- I like the words *Work. Work. Work. Work.* I think people are becoming lazy and need to be reminded that working hard is important.
- I don't agree with Takaichi because working too much causes stress and poor health.
- I don't like the words *Work. Work. Work. Work.* I think Japan has a lot of bad working expectations like unpaid overtime and actually working so hard that you die. To me, Takaichi's words encourage the continuation of these bad work habits