Quiz

For each question choose the one correct answer.

1. A. I'm really enjoying my new job, but the bus journey into the city takes a long time!
   B. _____ you've found somewhere nice to work!
   a) At least
   b) It's true

2. A. I've met a really nice guy, although we don't have the same taste in music!
   B. But when you _____, it's sometimes good to widen your horizons.
   a) think on it
   b) think about it

3. A. My brother is always late for family occasions and so he's always saying sorry to my parents – it really annoys me!
   B. On the _____, he is a lot of fun when he arrives
   a) hand
   b) other hand

4. A. Sarah is a loyal friend, though she's very forgetful about when and where we arrange to meet!
   B. Don't _____, she’s always there when it matters.
   a) forgot
   b) forget
Answers

1. a
2. b
3. b
4. b
Transcript

Amber
Hello. I’m Amber with another edition of How To, the series that gives you useful language to do things in English. Today, we ‘look on the bright side’ – we look at a handful of ways you can point out the positive side of a situation. And the good news is this is not a difficult thing to do, and by the end of the programme, you should be able to use five simple expressions to point out the positive side of a situation.

Let’s start with the expression that we use the most to perform this function in everyday conversations in English.

EXAMPLE
At least –
At least –

Amber
For example, if a friend complains to you:

EXAMPLE
My flatmate, Sue, is always borrowing my CDs and she only gives them back when I go and ask her for them!

Amber
You can point out the positive side of this situation – the fact that Sue does return the CDs when she’s asked! You can say:

EXAMPLE
Well, at least she returns them to you.

Amber
Listen again.

EXAMPLE
Complaint
My flatmate, Sue, is always borrowing my CDs and she only gives them back when I go and ask her for them!

Response
Well, at least she returns them to you.
Amber
Next, here’s another short and simple way to point out the positive side of a situation. You can just use the word ‘but’. For example, a friend complains:

EXAMPLE
My mum always calls me in the evenings when I’m trying to study.

Amber
You can point out the positive side of this situation – the fact that their mother does call! You could say something like this:

EXAMPLE
Yeah, but she does call you! My family never call me. I have to call them!

Amber
Easy, isn’t it? Listen again.

EXAMPLE
Complaint
My mum always calls me in the evenings when I’m trying to study.
Response
Yeah, but she does call you! My family never call me. I have to call them!

Amber
So far, we’ve looked at two expressions to point of the positive side of a situation: ‘at least’ and ‘but’. Now you try to use one of these. You’ll hear a complaint about someone called Pete, and just think about how you could use ‘at least’ or ‘but’ to reply to this complaint to point out the positive side of the situation.

EXAMPLE
Pete’s always telling jokes when we should be studying for our exams.

Amber
Here’s the complaint again:

EXAMPLE
Pete’s always telling jokes when we should be studying for our exams.
Amber
Now you try to answer, pointing out the positive.

EXAMPLE
Pete’s always telling jokes when we should be studying for our exams.

Amber
Did you manage that? In that situation, I’d say something like: ‘Well, at least he makes us laugh!’ Or: ‘But it’s easier to study when we’re feeling relaxed.’

Now, let’s look at three more handy expressions to point out the positive. First, here’s a nice one to use with friends because it’s reassuring and you can use it with ‘but’. You can say, ‘But when you think about it.’ For example, if a friend tells you this about a new romance:

EXAMPLE
We’re having a great time, though I’m not sure he’s right for me.

Amber
You can point out the positive side of this situation – the fact that they haven’t known each other for very long! You could say something like this:

EXAMPLE
Yeah, but when you think about it, you haven’t had much time to get to know each other yet. It was just your first date!

Amber
Now this next expression is easy to remember because you can think of your hands! For example, if a friend says to you:

EXAMPLE
I’m really pleased! I’ve got a job in a bar near my college. The only problem is I’m the only person working there who can’t speak English very well.

Amber
You can point out the positive side of this situation. You could say something like this:

EXAMPLE
That’s tough. On the other hand, it’s a good way to practise your English!
Amber
Listen again.

EXAMPLE
Complaint
I'm really pleased! I've got a job in a bar near my college. The only problem is I'm the only person working there who can’t speak English very well.
Response
That's tough. On the other hand, it's a good way to practise your English!

Amber
Now, here’s our last expression for today – and it’s slightly stronger than the others: you can say ‘don’t forget’! For example, a colleague complains:

EXAMPLE
I always hate going to ask the boss for a pay rise!

Amber
You can point out the positive side of this situation – you could say something like this:

EXAMPLE
Well, don't forget, she's the only person who can help you get a pay rise!

Amber
Listen again. And good luck looking on the bright side!

EXAMPLE
Complaint
I always hate going to ask the boss for a pay rise!
Response
Well, don't forget, she's the only person who can help you get a pay rise!