

Take The Bull By The Horns - Sample Page

John **downed** a cola and eyed the thick packet of pre-class material piled on the pine wood table in his room. He knew he should immediately start reading in preparation for the next day's opening session. As a non-native English speaker, he often **second-guessed** his comprehension and communication skills, even though his colleagues at Sing Systems **gave him high marks** for his ability to persuade others and lead projects. The 19 other class participants would be **sharp as tacks**, so John knew he would have to apply himself in the same diligent way he'd worked ever since coming to the United States to attend university.

His cabin, one of 20 stand-alone, one-bedroom structures on the ranch situated among leafy shade trees, was surprisingly modern. When he had registered for the class and read the word "cabin", he wondered if his western home would have indoor plumbing, and whether he would be in a camp-style dormitory with all the others. Instead, his **home on the range** had all the amenities of a city hotel. Plus, it was on the ground floor with windows that opened to the breeze so that he could hear the rustling trees.

Down – v. to down in this context means to drink rapidly, perhaps even all at one time.

- *"Please **down** your drinks before entering the lab."*

Second-guess – v. to doubt a previous belief or action, or to use hindsight to criticize some action

- *"Marketing **second-guessed** our executive decision to offer a different product mix to our most valued customers."*

Give high marks to – v. to rate highly

- *"We **gave high marks to** our vendor for delivering the parts ahead the due date."*

Sharp as a tack [or as tacks] – v. tacks are short, sharp pins, so to be sharp means to quickly understand something.

- *"That high school intern we've added to our team is **sharp as a tack**."*

Home on the Range – * the name of a famous cowboy song

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A clanging bell signaled dinner, and John realized that his stomach was grumbling. He hadn't eaten since breakfast.



With the help of his **bootstraps**, he pulled on a pair of leather cowboy boots he'd purchased on the Internet a week earlier. The pointed-toe, leather boots were soft yet thick – the real thing according to the Texas company website where he'd spent more money than he'd planned to spend on the boots. The boots were comfortable and the sturdy heel added a couple of inches to John's height, which also felt good.

He eyed the white cowboy hat hanging on a hook, a souvenir from the Lazy River Ranch, but he decided not to wear it. John was short, despite the boots, and slightly built. He reckoned that the wide-brimmed hat would be more appropriate if he were atop a horse, and more useful in the heat of the day. He opened the cabin door to the **mouth-watering** smell of **barbeque** drifting over the ranch, and he strode across the hard, dry ground to meet his classmates.



Bootstrap – n. v. a strap on a boot for pulling it on. In business, to bootstrap a business means to finance it without outside help

- “My partner and I **bootstrapped** our new company because we couldn't get any venture capital.”

Mouth-watering – adj. appetizing enough to make the mouth create saliva in anticipation. In business, an opportunity that one anticipates.

- The thought of capturing market share in Asia was **mouth-watering**.”

Barbeque [BBQ] – n. a meal [usually of meat] cooked outdoors on an open fire or on a charcoal or gas cooker.

- “Our team is holding a quarterly **barbeque** to celebrate the completion of our project.”