



## Illustrated Idioms

(Illustrated: to make clear, clarify; an example)

Grades 3-6

- **What is an idiom?** An idiom is a word, phrase or expression that cannot be taken literally. In other words, when used in everyday language, idioms have a meaning other than the basic one you would find in the dictionary. Idioms are a tool to make students writing more entertaining. They paint a picture for the reader.
- **Matching Idioms:** Use idiom cards to play a matching game.
- **Illustrate the Literal Meaning:** Students define each idiom literally and draw pictures on their white board. For example: *Hold your horses*. Students draw someone holding several horses.
- **Illustrate the Intended Meaning:** Students define the idiom for its intended meaning. Draw pictures on their white boards. For example: *Hold your horses*. Students draw someone stopping and waiting patiently.

- **Idiom Booklet:** Provide students with a white piece of paper. Fold the paper in half. On the left half of the paper, write the idiom and draw the literal meaning. On the right half of the paper, write the idiom, and draw its intended meaning. Review these drawings often. This is a successful method for making idioms real to students.
- **Charades:** After students know a few idioms, ask a student to act out an idiom. Classmates guess the idiom. Charades can be combined with most idiom strategies.
- **Scavenger Hunt:** Use the idiom cards and meaning cards provided. Scatter the cards around the room. Choose teams. Students race to find matching cards. The team with the most matches is the winner.
- **Idiom Sentence:** Ask students to choose an idiom, and then write a sentence using the idiom. Students share their idiom sentences.

- **Amelia Bedelia:** Amelia Bedelia is a story character that does exactly what other people tell her to do. She takes everything literally. Choose an Amelia Bedelia book by Peggy Parish and Herman Parish. Read the story to the class. Ask students to choose a favorite idiom from the story. Students illustrate and/or act out the idioms.
- **Variation on Amelia Bedelia:** Divide students into small groups. Read a different page from Amelia Bedelia to each group. Students choose an idiom from that page. Use poster paper. Students make two large illustrations of the idiom: the literal meaning and the intended meaning.
- **Food Idioms:** Refer to the list of Food Idioms. Choose one or two of the idioms. Ask students to illustrate the idioms. However, students should "go overboard" when they draw the pictures. Talk about "playing with words." Exaggerate the pictures so they are ridiculous. Make a class booklet of the Food Idioms.

## Food Idioms

1. Thomas needed money for the movie so he had to **butter up** this father.
2. She turned as **red as a beet** when I caught her cheating.
3. Marco acted **cool as a cucumber** on the day of the big race.
4. My father stopped to **chew the fat** with our neighbor, Mr. Jones.
5. Jake said the test would be a **piece of cake**.
6. Maybe he was telling the truth, or maybe he was **full of beans**.
7. At the bake sale, my mother's brownies **sold like hot cakes**.
8. The puppies in the cage were **going bananas**.
9. My aunt's ring looked expensive, but **she got it for peanuts**.
10. Stephanie is **the apple of her father's eye**.
11. My teacher told me I had to **beef up** my report on George Washington.
12. Jack is **the big cheese** at the cable company.
12. Even though Paul worked at the job, he wasn't able to **cut the mustard**.
13. We should have known the **half-baked idea** would not work.
14. Please don't **spill the beans** about the surprise party.
15. The **souped-up** car made so much noise that our neighbors called to complain.
16. The vase was broken so there was no use **crying over spilled milk**.
17. Books by that author are not **my cup of tea**.
18. So that's the problem **in a nutshell!**

- **Share the Meaning:** Student-pairs choose an idiom. On their white boards, write the meaning of the idiom. Share the idiom and their meanings with the class.

1. That's **the way the cookie crumbles**. *That's the way it goes.*
2. He's **feeling blue** today. *He was feeling sad today.*
3. You're **walking on thin ice**. *You'd better watch out. Stop and think about this.*
4. Uh, oh. We're in **hot water!** *We're in trouble.*
5. You'd better **hold your tongue and button your lip**. *Stop talking.*
6. Mr. Smith has **eyes in the back of his head**. *We can't get away with misbehaving.*
7. Something's **fishy** around here. *Something's strange around here.*
8. Tell me about it. **I'm all ears**. *I'm really listening.*
9. He was **all thumbs** when he tried to make a clay pot. *He didn't have much skill.*
10. Well, it looks like we **bit the dust**. *We lost!*

- **Guess My Idiom:** Student-pairs choose an idiom. Act out only part of the idiom. For example: If the idiom is "up the wall," just act out the word "up" or the word "wall." See if classmates can guess based on partial information.

Lemon	Defective
On the Line	In danger
Hang On	Keep trying
Money Talks	Money has the power to influence people
A Leopard Can't Change His Spots	You can't change who you are
Out of the Woods	Out of danger
Feel Like a Million Dollars	Feeling so wonderful

Make Ends Meet	Hardly enough to pay the bills
The Early Bird Catches the Worm	Get up early and get the job done
A Barrel of Laughs	Something very funny
Go to the Dogs	Become run-down In serious need of repair
Take the Bull By the Horns	Act decisively to correct the situation
Cat Got Your Tongue?	Keeping quiet
Let the Cat Out of the Bag	Had told someone ahead of time

Bend Over Backwards	Tried very hard
Knock Someone's Sock's Off	Get very excited
Scratch Someone's Back	I'll help you if you will help me
Stick Out One's Neck	Taking a great risk
Lose One's Shirt	Lose a great deal of money
String Someone Along	Deceiving someone
Get in Someone's Hair	Bother me and make me very angry