

Idioms

Teaching

An **idiom** is a phrase that has a special meaning different from the meanings of the individual words. Notice how the idiom *ran out of gas* efficiently conveys the idea of being very tired.

After working for three hours, I just **ran out of gas**.

After working for three hours, I just **got so tired that I couldn't go on**.

The chart below lists some common idioms and their meanings.

Idiom	Meaning
A. all thumbs	very clumsy
B. as light as a feather	almost weightless
C. bark up the wrong tree	be mistaken
D. drop the ball	fail to follow through
E. fly off the handle	lose control
F. get cold feet	be afraid to do something
G. green with envy	extremely jealous
H. hit the nail on the head	be exactly right
I. open up a can of worms	begin something that should be left alone
J. put on one's thinking cap	think seriously

A. Identifying Idioms

Complete each sentence using an idiom from the chart. Each idiom is used only once. Write the letter of the correct idiom in the space provided. You may need to mentally adjust verb tenses or make other grammatical changes so that the idiom fits the sentence.

1. I am disappointed in Sheila. She really _____ when she didn't finish the project.
2. Jerry stood at the end of the diving board, but _____ at the last minute.
3. Stan is so strong that he thinks the 50-pound weights are _____.
4. I'm sure you can figure out the answer if you just _____.
5. If you think Mom will let you go mountain climbing without adult supervision, you are _____.
6. When Emma tried to thread a needle, she proved she was _____.
7. If you even mention that subject, you will _____ that nobody wants to deal with.
8. I know you're angry at me, but you don't have to _____.
9. Owen's new bicycle made his sister _____. She wishes she had one!
10. That answer really _____; I couldn't agree more.

Figurative Language Worksheet

First, match each figure of language with the appropriate label and **circle** or **highlight** the specific language that creates the figure. Sometimes there are two different figures in the same words.

Second, **explain** what is being compared to what in the figure of speech.

A. Personification

B. Metaphor

C. Simile

D. Hyperbole

1. ____ "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains."
(Henry David Thoreau, "Where I lived and what I lived for")
2. ____ Undisturbed and serene, the stubborn rock refused to move, no matter how hard the grunting workmen pushed. "C'mon, baby, move your butt!" cajoled Bill as he pried under the rock with a crow bar.
3. ____ "The coconut trees were like feather dusters struck by lightning." (Mark Twain, "Roughing It")
4. ____ As the powerful hurricane rushed toward the coast, the Grim Reaper (death) stood ready to harvest a new crop.
5. ____ "Summer fogs are common on the Oregon Coast; inland heat waves drag them from the Pacific as a man with a fever pulls the blanket to his chin." (D.J. Duncan, *The River Why*)
6. ____ The frightened fisherman looked over the edge of the boat into the inky blackness of the ocean, wondering what mammoth creature was bending his fishing rod so.
7. ____ Never, thought the love-struck Alma, had there been a piece of music so melodious, so angelic, so sublime, as that which now floated up to her window from Herbert's old violin.
8. ____ The mosquitoes, eager for a feast, sang ominously about my ears as I settled into the dark of my tent.
9. ____ Who was it who first said "TV is a barren wasteland?"
10. ____ Thinking her children had been wronged, Eliza readied herself for a fight, fangs and claws bared. Blood up and bellowing she entered the principal's office with the formidable presence of a wounded she-bear.