

## Ready, Set, READ!

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The word bark, meaning the sound a dog makes, comes from the Old English word *beorkan* and the Middle English word *berkin*. Bark, which names the tough exterior of a tree, comes from the Middle English word *barke* and the Middle Low German word *barke*. But where does the expression bark up the wrong tree come from?

It goes back to colonial times. Many kinds of hunting dogs were called “coon dogs.” Their job was to find raccoons. They chased them through the underbrush and then up into a tree. Once the dog had “treed” the raccoon, it would bark furiously at the base of that tree. This would alert the dog’s master to come and shoot the trapped animal.

But the nocturnal raccoon was a crafty critter. It would often escape in the dark through the high branches to another tree. That left the hound below barking up the wrong tree.

1. Explain the everyday meaning of barking up the wrong tree. Give an example.

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2. Which is the best title for this piece?

- A. Raccoon Hunting
- B. Two Kinds of Bark
- C. In the Nation’s Capital
- D. Origin of an Idiom

## BrainTeaser

What does each saying mean? Read the definitions on the right.

Write the number on the line.

1. Don’t **jump the gun**.
2. Just **hold your tongue**.
3. Let’s **shoot the breeze**.
4. We’re **in the doghouse**.
5. I got a **slap on the wrist**.
6. He felt **under the weather**.
7. She’s **walking on eggshells**.
8. You’re **all bark and no bite**.
9. They have **ants in their pants**.

- \_\_\_\_\_ being careful and tactful
- \_\_\_\_\_ noisy but unproductive
- \_\_\_\_\_ not totally healthy
- \_\_\_\_\_ act too quickly
- \_\_\_\_\_ being punished
- \_\_\_\_\_ chat casually
- \_\_\_\_\_ can’t sit still
- \_\_\_\_\_ mild warning
- \_\_\_\_\_ wait to speak