



Don't Take It Literally!

Many idioms, if taken literally, conjure up truly humorous images. Could you picture a storm where it was literally "raining cats and dogs" or a person who was truly "two-faced"? In this activity, students create "literal" cartoons out of their favorite idioms.

What to Do

MATERIALS • copies of the template (page 35)
• colored pencils

1. Give each student a copy of the template.
2. Ask students to pick an idiom that conjures up a funny image when taken literally and write the idiom in the space under the title.

3. On the lines, have students write the idiom's actual meaning and a short descriptive paragraph using the idiom properly.
4. In the frame, have them draw a colorful cartoon of the idiom's literal meaning.
5. Hang up the drawings so that everyone can appreciate the humor of idioms.

Suggested Idioms

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| ♦ Air your dirty laundry in public | ♦ Eat crow | ♦ Keep your nose to the grindstone | ♦ Run circles around someone |
| ♦ Albatross around your neck | ♦ Eat your words | ♦ Knee-high to a grasshopper | ♦ Saved by the bell |
| ♦ All ears/thumbs | ♦ Elbow grease | ♦ Lay an egg | ♦ Sight for sore eyes |
| ♦ Ants in your pants | ♦ Eyes in the back of your head | ♦ Lend an ear | ♦ Skeleton in your closet |
| ♦ At the end of your rope | ♦ Fat cat | ♦ Little pitchers have big ears | ♦ Strike a happy medium |
| ♦ Backseat driver | ♦ Fifth wheel | ♦ Long in the tooth | ♦ Sweep you off your feet |
| ♦ Bite off more than you can chew | ♦ Fly by the seat of your pants | ♦ Mad as a wet hen | ♦ Throw the baby out with the bathwater |
| ♦ Bite the dust | ♦ Follow your nose | ♦ Name is mud | ♦ Throw the book at someone |
| ♦ Bite the hand that feeds you | ♦ Full of hot air | ♦ Need something like a hole in the head | ♦ Till the cows come home |
| ♦ Bury your head in the sand | ♦ Get a kick out of something | ♦ On pins and needles | ♦ Too many cooks spoil the broth |
| ♦ Butter someone up | ♦ Give your eyeteeth for something | ♦ On the ball | ♦ Two-faced |
| ♦ Button your lip | ♦ Go climb a tree/jump in a lake | ♦ On top of the world | ♦ Walk on eggs |
| ♦ Butterflies in the stomach | ♦ Go over like a lead balloon | ♦ Open a can of worms | ♦ Walking on air |
| ♦ Cat got your tongue? | ♦ Green thumb | ♦ Pay through the nose | ♦ Wear your heart on your sleeve |
| ♦ Chew up the scenery | ♦ Green with envy | ♦ Pie in the sky | ♦ Wet behind the ears |
| ♦ Climb the walls | ♦ Head in the clouds | ♦ Play cat and mouse | ♦ Where there's smoke, there's fire |
| ♦ Cost an arm and a leg | ♦ Hit the books/road/roof | ♦ Pull your leg | ♦ Wild-goose chase |
| ♦ Dog's life | ♦ Hold your tongue | ♦ Pull yourself together | ♦ Zipper your mouth |
| ♦ Drive you up the wall | ♦ In hot water | ♦ Put your money where your mouth is | |
| | ♦ In the doghouse | ♦ Raining cats and dogs | |
| | | ♦ Raise the roof | |