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

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