



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