

## Idioms Worksheet

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**Instructions:** Idioms are expressions that people say that mean something different than what they sound like. Read the passages and identify what the idiom really means.

1. John was super busy. He was talking on the phone with his office while he stirred the soup that was cooking on the stove and starting to burn. His son Billy walked up to him and said “Dad, I need help with my homework”. John replied with “Hang on!”

What did John mean when he said “hang on”?

- a) He wanted Billy to hang his homework from the stove.
- b) He wanted Billy to figure out his homework on his own.
- c) He wanted Billy to wait for a moment until he could help him.
- d) He wanted Billy to eat some soup.

2. The children walked into the classroom and found their teacher, Ms. Donna waiting for them. All of the chairs were arranged in a circle around Ms. Donna. As they approached the circle of chairs, Ms. Donna said “Have a seat” and waved her hand toward the chairs.

What did Ms. Donna want the children to do when she said “Have a seat”?

- a) She wanted them to sit down in the chairs.
- b) She wanted them to take the chairs home with them.
- c) She wanted them to put their names on their chairs.
- d) She wanted them to go outside.

3. Mrs. Batson was clearly having a rough day. The children in her class were running around the classroom and screaming. There were toys and art supplies everywhere. Three children were pulling on her clothes and singing as loudly as they could. Mrs. Batson looked at the children and said “You’re driving me up the wall!”

What did Mrs. Batson mean when she said “You’re driving me up the wall?”

- a) She needed to take a drive to get away from them.
- b) There were cars painted on the walls.
- c) The children were annoying her.
- d) The children were driving a car straight up a wall.

4. James was a very helpful child. He loved helping his mother and she really needed his help today. It was his brother's birthday party so all of their family would be coming to the house in 2 hours. James helped his mother by cleaning up the play room, sweeping the kitchen, cleaning the bathrooms, and organizing the bookshelves. James' mother told him how much she appreciated that he bent over backwards to help her get ready.

What did James' mother mean when she said he "bent over backwards?"

- a) Her back was hurting from bending over all day.
- b) James was leaning over backwards when he did the cleaning.
- c) She wanted James to bend over while he cleaned.
- d) James did everything he could possibly do to help her.

5. When Cody walked into his house he immediately knew that something fishy was going on. All of the lights in the house were off even though he knew his mom and brothers were home. The house was also incredibly quiet, which was rare since his youngest brother was usually VERY loud. He could also smell birthday cake. Suddenly, all of his friends and family jumped out from behind the couch and yelled "Surprise!"

What did Cody mean when he said something "fishy" was going on?

- a) Something weird was happening.
- b) There were fish in the living room.
- c) The house smelled like fish.
- d) His dad was taking him fishing.

6. Jacob was in the school talent show. He practiced for weeks to perfect his juggling act. When the big day came, he got up on stage and juggled 3 flaming sticks and didn't even miss a single one. Everyone cheered when he finished. When he walked off stage, his dad said "Wow, you really knocked my socks off!"

What did Jacob's dad mean when he said that his son knocked his socks off?

- a) Jacob's dad hated the performance.
- b) The fire was so hot that it melted his shoes and socks off.
- c) Jacob's performance had amazed and surprised his dad.
- d) Jacob's dad had taken his shoes and socks off during the performance.

7. Molly ran into the house and told her mother that she had just seen a huge beanstalk growing from their garden. She told her mother that the beanstalk was so tall that it reached the sky and that she, Molly, had climbed that beanstalk and met a giant! Molly's mother looked at her skeptically and said "you're pulling my leg".

What did Molly's mom mean when she said, "you're pulling my leg"?

- a) She thought Molly was teasing or making a joke.
- b) Molly was hanging on her mother's leg while she told her.
- c) Molly's mother's leg was hurting.
- d) She thought Molly had gone crazy and needed to see a doctor.

8. The kids at the pool were running around and splashing each other with water. They were shooting each other with water guns and jumping from the side of the pool to do cannonballs. Then, their swim teacher showed up and told them to quit horsing around. It was time to work.

What did the swim teacher want the children to stop doing when he said "quit horsing around"?

- a) Being in the pool
- b) Putting horses in the pool
- c) Playing around and splashing each other
- d) Playing a horse-game in the pool

9. Julie was planning a surprise party for Tom. Julie was careful not to tell Tom anything that may let him know that they were planning a big surprise. But, the morning before the party was planned, Tom walked in and said "Hey, are you planning a surprise party for me?" Julie frowned and said "who let the cat out of the bag?"

What did Julie mean when she asked, "who let the cat out of the bag"?

- a) There was a cat running around and she wanted to know where it came from.
- b) Julie wanted to know who told him the secret.
- c) Julie had a bag full of toy cats.
- d) Julie wanted to know where the party was going to be.

10. The Sanderson family was going on vacation to Disney World. Papa Sanderson wanted to plan out everything that the family would do. He wanted a schedule of exactly what time they would get up, eat breakfast, and get to the park. Then, he wanted to put the rides in the order that they would ride them. However, everyone else in the family wanted to take things a little easier. Mama Sanderson said, “Why don’t we just play it by ear?”

What did Mama Sanderson want to do when she said “play it by ear”?

- a) Listen to music while they waited for the rides
- b) Ride every ride in the park
- c) Bring along a violin and play beautiful music on the trip
- d) Make up the plan as they went instead of planning everything out

11. Larry walked up to a game at the carnival. He watched another child play the game. The child grabbed a big hammer and swung it and hit a metal circle as hard as he could. When he did, a metal piece flew up so high that it hit a bell at the top of the game. The carnival worker saw Larry looking at it and handed him the hammer. “Give it a shot,” he said.

What did the carnival worker think Larry should do when he said “give it a shot”?

- a) Shoot the game with a gun
- b) Try to play the game
- c) Break the game apart
- d) Throw the hammer away

12. Mrs. Gibson handed out the tests to the children. Lucy was very worried that she wouldn’t know the answers. However, she was happy to find that she knew every answer and finished the test quickly. When she handed back her test, she said “that was a piece of cake!”

What did Lucy think of the test when she said “that was a piece of cake”?

- a) The test was very easy.
- b) The test was very hard.
- c) The test was actually a piece of cake, which she ate.
- d) The test smelled like cake.

13. Rebecca's mom picked her up from school on Tuesday. They were headed to her girl scout meeting. Rebecca asked her mom "Did you remember to bring my girl scout uniform?"  
Rebecca's mom said "Oh no! It totally slipped my mind!"

What did Rebecca's mom mean when she said it slipped her mind?

- a) She decided not to bring the outfit.
- b) She forgot to bring the outfit.
- c) She brought the outfit along.
- d) She slipped and fell on the ice and landed on her mind.

14. Ronald was playing baseball inside his mom's house. His friend threw him the ball and he hit it with his bat. The ball went flying across the room and broke his mother's favorite lamp.  
"You're in hot water now!" his friend said.

What did Ronald's friend mean when he said he was in hot water?

- a) He would be in trouble when his mom found out what happened.
- b) The lamp was full of hot water which got all over Ronald when it broke.
- c) Ronald needed to take a hot bath.
- d) Ronald's mom would congratulate him on a great hit.

15. Barry was in line for the biggest and fastest ride at the amusement park. It was his first roller coaster ever and he was super excited to go on it. However, when he got to the front of the line, he saw the roller coaster soar over the edge of the drop and fly downward toward the ground. He started to get nervous. When his friends asked him what was wrong, Barry said, "I'm having second thoughts about doing this."

What did Barry mean when he said he was having second thoughts?

- a) He was still very excited about going on the roller coaster.
- b) He had changed his mind about wanting to go on the roller coaster.
- c) He was eating second helpings of the popcorn he bought.
- d) He was thinking about how cool the roller coaster was.

16. A group of kids were talking about the star wars movie they had watched last night. They were all talking about their favorite scenes and their favorite characters. Then, Billy walked up and said "I like hot dogs!". One of the other kids said, "Well that was out of the blue."

What did the kid mean when he said the comment was "out of the blue"?

- a) Billy's nickname was "Blue" and the comment came out of him.
- b) Billy must love blue hot dogs.
- c) The comment was random and unexpected.
- d) The comment made perfect sense with what they were talking about.

17. Johnny had a problem and needed someone to talk to. He went up to his teacher, Mr. Kool. Johnny said, "Mr. Kool, I have a problem and I need some help." Mr. Kool immediately put down what he was doing, turned his body toward Johnny and said "I'm all ears."

What did Mr. Kool mean when he said "I'm all ears"?

- a) He had an abnormally large number of ears.
- b) His ears were hurting.
- c) He didn't care what Johnny had to say.
- d) He was ready to listen to Johnny.

18. Billy was disappointed with his grade on the math test. He got an "F". What bothered him the most though was that his teacher was making him stay after school to work on it. Billy told his friend Eric why he was upset and Eric said, "Don't worry man, I'm in the same boat. I have to stay after, too."

What did Eric mean when he said he was in the same boat?

- a) Eric was standing inside a boat.
- b) Eric was in the same situation and also had to stay after school.
- c) Eric felt bad that Billy would have to stay after school while he went swimming.
- d) Eric would go fishing later that day.

19. Jamie really wanted to go to the park but his sister really wanted to go to the pool. Jamie's mother told them that they would have to agree on one place to go because she wasn't going to drive them to two different places. "But Mom," Jamie said, "We just don't see eye to eye on where to go!"

What did Jamie mean when he said they didn't see eye to eye?

- a) Jamie was much taller than his sister so their eyes were at different heights.
- b) They didn't agree on where to go.
- c) Jamie's sister wouldn't look him in the eyes.
- d) Jamie couldn't see his sister anymore.

20. June had been working on math problems for what seemed like hours. Her eyes were hurting, her hand was cramping, and she didn't think her brain could calculate one more equation. Finally, she looked at her mom and said "Can we just call it a day?"

What did June mean when she asked to call it a day?

- a) She didn't like math.
- b) She wanted to know what day of the week it was.
- c) She wanted it to be Saturday already.
- d) She wanted to be done with math problems for now.

Answer Key:

1. c
2. a
3. c
4. d
5. a
6. c
7. a
8. c
9. b
10. d
11. b
12. a
13. b
14. a
15. b
16. c
17. d
18. b
19. b
20. d