

## **Getting an “Upper Hand” on Idioms**

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Grade(s):** 4-6

### **Overview**

Help your students get an “upper hand” on idioms with this lesson plan that challenges them to identify idioms (with an Idiom Match-up Game) and then group idiomatic expressions according to different “themes” or “topics.”

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Recognize idiomatic expressions
- Group idioms by themes
- Use idioms in context in writing and speaking.

### **IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts**

**Standard 4:** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

**Standard 6:** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

### **Materials Needed**

- Set of blue and white index cards
- Magic marker
- WordTeasers: Idioms

### **Preparation**

Prepare a set of Idiom Match-up Game Cards, using one pair of blue and white index cards for each student in the classroom. (If you have 30 students, for example, you will need 15 blue cards and 15 white cards.) On the white cards, write the first part of an idiomatic expression. For example, your white cards might include: “once in a blue...”; “hit the...”; “throw in the....” On

the blue cards, they write the word that completes each idiomatic expression, e.g., you would write the word “moon” on one card to complete the idiom “once in a blue moon.”

### **Getting Started**

Write these two sentences on the board:

**BOY:** I think my friend has lost his marbles.

**GIRL:** Maybe we should help him find them.

Call on two students to read the sentences out loud to the class. Then ask: “What do you think the boy meant when he said that his friend had lost his marbles? Do you think he meant that his friend had actually lost a bag of marbles? Why or why not? What else could he have meant?”

### **Development**

Explain to students that there are many phrases in English that don’t mean exactly what the individual words might suggest. These phrases are called idioms. To help students begin to understand and identify different idioms, distribute the blue and white idiom index cards that you have prepared, giving one card to each student in random order. Tell students that when you say “Match-Up,” students should try to find the matching part of their idiom as quickly as possible. As soon as two students “match” their idiom, those two students sit down.

### **WordTeasers: Idioms Activity**

Make five wide columns on the chalkboard. At the top of each column, write the name of a different category of idioms, e.g., Animal Idioms, Body Parts Idioms, Food Idioms, Clothes Idioms. Give students time to brainstorm idioms for each category, e.g., Animal Idioms: bull in a china shop; Body Parts Idioms: green thumb; Food Idioms: piece of cake; Clothes Idioms: stuffed shirt. Let students come to the chalkboard to write as many idioms under each category as they can think of. Then ask them to explain what each idiom means.

**Extension:** Using the WordTeasers: Idioms game box, let students pull out an Idiom Challenge Card, read the Challenge to a specific classmate, (e.g., “When are you most likely to act as if you had ants in your pants?”), and see what kind of hilarious answer they are likely to get.

**For more Teacher Lesson Plans and Resources go to [www.wordteasers.com](http://www.wordteasers.com).**