

# Idioms

Podcast Length: 12:42

Character Value: **Being considerate**

Health Message: **Exercise and moods**

## Synopsis

Today's Walking Classroom podcast focuses on idioms. Idioms are groups of words that, when said together, have an understood meaning that is different from what the words actually mean. For example, "to be on the moon" doesn't actually mean that a person is on the moon, it is an idiom that people say when someone is very distracted. All languages have idioms, and sometimes it can be difficult for people who are learning a new language to understand the meanings behind them.

## Objectives

- Analyze common idioms of the English language and learn of their history.
- Interpret idiomatic expressions from other languages.

## Procedure

If you want to compare student comprehension before and after listening, administer the Comprehension Quiz before doing anything related to the podcast. Retest after walking.

1. Review key vocabulary (included definitions are limited to the context of today's podcast).
  - **familiarity (noun):** knowledge of, to be familiar with someone or something  
*I had no **familiarity** with the game of Cricket, so I was unable to tell which team was winning or by how much.*
  - **originated (verb):** the time frame or place of when something began  
*Although it is a modern-day American favorite, the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" **originated** in Europe more than 400 years ago.*
2. Build background by asking students, "How many of you have ever heard the expression, 'I've got your back?'" What does it mean? Do you literally carry around someone else's back?
3. Allow time for discussion.
4. Podcast preview: "Today we're going to listen to a lesson about idioms and what might happen if people were to interpret them literally! Can you imagine? Ready? Let's go!"
5. Walk!

## Questions for Thought and Discussion

Upon return to the classroom, discuss the main ideas and content from the podcast using the questions and suggested answers below.

### 1. What were some of the big ideas of this podcast?

- ✓ *An idiom is a group of words whose literal meaning is different than the actual meaning of the expression.*

*The origins of many idioms can be traced to an event or custom, but the origin of many idioms is unknown.*

- ✓ *Most languages have their own idioms, and an unfamiliarity with the language can lead to misunderstandings of intended meanings.*

### 2. People use idioms all the time in their everyday conversations.

#### a. What are some common idioms that you or people you know use regularly?

- ✓ *Suggestions: Cat got your tongue, actions speak louder than words, barking up the wrong tree, bite off more than you can chew, can't judge a book by its cover, etc.*

#### b. What do you think the history of those idioms might be?

- ✓ *Example: Can't judge a book by its cover...maybe a person looked at the cover of a book and thought it was one they wouldn't like, only to later read it and find out it was one of their favorites.*

### 3. Idioms can be difficult for individuals that are trying to learn a new language.

#### a. Do we need idioms in our language?

- ✓ *Suggestion: Idioms can be funny, express a great deal of information in a few words, help paint a picture in our minds, create a sense of community, etc. However, they can be confusing and frustrating to people learning a new language.*

#### b. Why is it important to be considerate of people who speak a different language when we are communicating?

- ✓ *Suggestion: Respect is important in any situation, and when people are making an effort to learn a new language, it's important to appreciate and encourage their efforts.*

# Idioms Comprehension Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- The word "idiom" comes from the Greek word, "idios", which translates to
  - one's own
  - foolish
  - goodbye
- Idioms are
  - phrases that only have one meaning.
  - phrases that have an understood meaning that is different from what the words actually mean.
  - phrases from ancient Greek times that are still used today.
- The history of all idioms can be traced back to Greece and stories from Greek mythology.
  - true
  - false
- The Japanese idiom "yokomeshi" translates to "a sideways meal". What does it really mean?
  - eating a meal with a foreigner
  - eating while lying down
  - eating dessert before dinner
- What would be the best adjective to describe a person who used many idioms in her speech while talking with a person unfamiliar with the English language?
  - adventurous
  - cooperative
  - thoughtless
- Which of the following sentences does NOT contain an idiom?
  - "I broke my arm falling from the trapeze," she said.
  - Before the play, Mary said, "Break a leg."
  - Jack didn't know how to break the ice with the new girl.
- Which of the following statements about idioms is false?
  - Most languages have their own idioms which are very easy to understand.
  - The literal meaning of the words in an idiom is different than the actual meaning of the expression.
  - We do not know the origin of many idioms.
- When might a Russian person say, "I'm not hanging noodles on your ears"?
  - The person has just finished cooking and is asking for help with the dishes.
  - The person is studying really hard for an upcoming exam.
  - The person has just told a story about how she was mistaken for a famous movie star while she was at the grocery store.
- When you walk, your heart pumps faster and more oxygen-rich blood circulates around your body.
  - true
  - false
- Scientists have proven that exercise puts people in a bad mood.
  - true
  - false